



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

1. Drama, English

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

THE SPINGARN COLLECTION
OF
CRITICISM AND LITERARY THEORY
PRESENTED BY
J. E. SPINGARN

To Prof. Joel P. Springarn

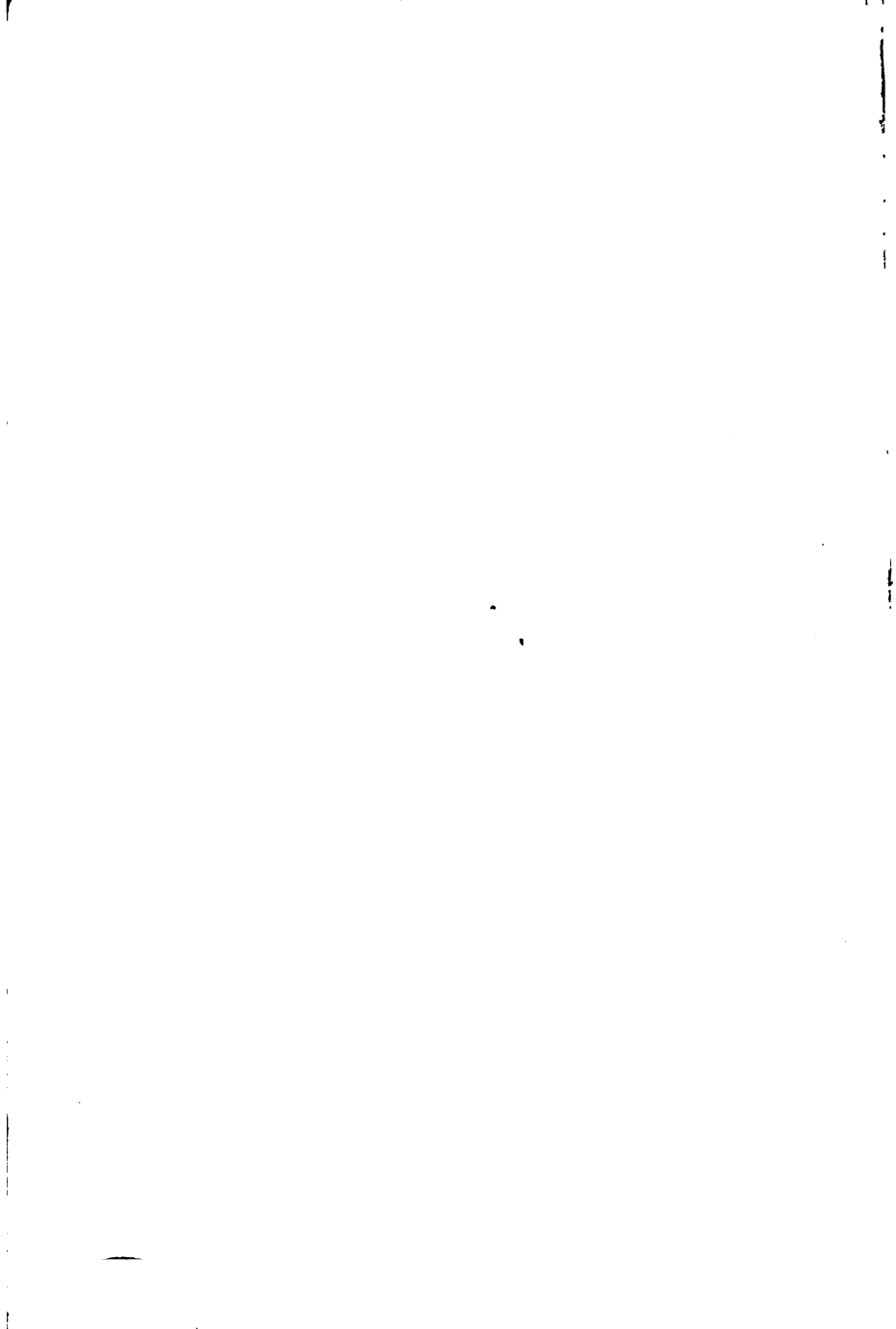
with kind regards from

The Author

Kenosha, 1904.

N.A.E.

Bond



ZENOBIA

*All dramatic and other rights strictly reserved,
a public performance having been held in accordance with the requirements of the Act.*

By the Same Author

THE IMMORTALS, ETC. . .	Price 3/6 net.
AN ODE TO THE SUN, ETC. . .	„ 2/6 „
AT STRATFORD FESTIVAL . . .	„ 1/- „
ANOTHER SHEAF . . .	„ 2/6 „

ZENOBIA

A DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

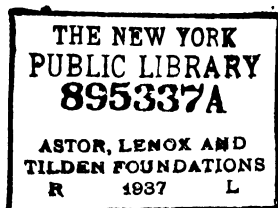
Richard BY
R. WARWICK BOND

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS
VIGO STREET W

1899

4V

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



Ἡ φύσις οὐ ταπεινὸν ἡμᾶς ζῶον οὐδ' ἀγεννὲς ἔκρινε, τὸν ἀνθρώπον, ἀλλ',
ὥς εἰς μεγάλην τιμὴν παρήγγυρε, εἰς τὸν βίον καὶ εἰς τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον
ἐπάγουσα, θεατὰς τινὰς τῶν ὄλων αὐτῆς ἐσομένους καὶ φιλοτιμοτάτους
ἀγωνιστάς, εὐθὺς ἀμαχὸν ἔρωτα ἐνέφυσεν ἡμῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς παντὸς ἀεὶ τοῦ
μεγάλου, καὶ ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς δαιμονιωτέρου.

Longin. de Sublim. xxxv.

Nature chose not us, her brood of Man, to be creatures base and ignoble : rather she ushered us into life and her vast rondure as into some high festival, where we might witness and be stirred to emulate her mighty scale ; implanting in our breasts from the outset an unconquerable passion for all of great that meets us, for all that seems diviner than ourselves.

Longinus on the Sublime, sect. 35.

Art thou a Magistrate ? then be severe :
If studious ; copie fair, what time hath blurr'd ;
Redeem truth from his jawes : if souldier,
Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not : for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

GEORGE HERBERT, *The Temple* (1633).

WANG
CLUB
YACCL

PREFATORY NOTE

THE drama here offered to the public—retouched work of 1895-6, and the fulfilment, however meagre, of a dream of much earlier years—is founded chiefly on the brilliant narrative of Gibbon's tenth and eleventh chapters; though I have spared no pains in examining the original sources, and have embodied from them a few touches not found in the modern historian. His account is mainly based on the Greek of Zonaras and Zosimus in the Byzantine History, and the Latin of Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus in the Augustan; of whom Zosimus is the most picturesque, and Vopiscus perhaps the most reliable, writer.

Of previous dramatic attempts to deal with the story, we have to regret the loss of a *Zenobia*, mentioned in Henslowe's Diary as performed once at the Rose Theatre on March 9, 1591-2. Next comes a prose tragedy of the French classical school, *Zenobie*, by the Abbé d'Aubignac, published at Paris, 1647: a somewhat frigid piece, whose scene is laid wholly in Zenobia's chamber. Longinus is not in the cast; but Zabas and Timagene, Zenobia's generals, are rivals for her love, and die in her defence. The circumstances of her suicide at the close seem reminiscent of *Antony and Cleopatra*. A Portuguese version, printed at Lisbon about 1785 (*Tragicomedia intitulada Zenobia no Oriente*) again omits Longinus; and

PREFATORY NOTE

hazards a grave departure from history in the assassination of Aurelian in mid-triumph by his general Decius, who defends himself in a speech to the Romans, is declared Emperor, and invites Zenobia to share his throne. Murphy's play of the same title (*Zenobia*, London, 1768), which was performed at Drury Lane, and for which Garrick wrote an epilogue, does not deal with Palmyra at all, but with a war between Rome and Armenia: and, similarly, Adolf Wilbrandt's *Der Meister von Palmyra* (Stuttgart, 1870), though it introduces Longinus, is no transcript of the thrilling series of events recorded by Gibbon, but a purely mystical and imaginary creation, in which Zenobia only appears at the end as a young girl, the latest love of the worn-out hero Apelles.

Besides these, Zenobia's story is borrowed by Chaucer, in his *Monkes Tale*, from Boccacio's *De Mulieribus Claris*, cap. xcvi. ; and forms the fourteenth in the Second Volume of Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. It is also the subject of a romance by W. Ware (New York, 1838, 8vo), which was re-issued under the title of *The Last Days and Fall of Palmyra*, in Messrs. Cassell's Red Library. The book is largely occupied with the conflict in thoughtful minds of that age between Paganism and Christianity, a conflict which finds no echo in these pages; but those who care to make the comparison between my play and the novel will see that I have borrowed, here an incident, and there some suggestion for the minor characters, from the latter.

The following brief summary of the historical facts will enable the reader to judge how far I have modified them to suit my dramatic purpose. A few notes are appended at the end, for the benefit of those who care for original authorities and fuller detail.

PREFATORY NOTE

The defeat and capture near Edessa, A.D. 260, of the Roman Emperor Valerian by Sapor, King of Persia, was followed by a period of anarchy, during which the Roman provinces were harassed by incursions of the Goths and other barbarians, and various individuals in different parts of the Empire asserted their independence. The only attempt to avenge the Roman defeat was made by Odenathus, a wealthy citizen of Palmyra, who gathered a force among the Syrian towns, and chased Sapor back to Ctesiphon, on the east of the Euphrates. The supineness of Valerian's successor, Gallienus, was glad to recognise Odenathus' achievement by the title of Augustus, with authority over the East; and on his death in 267 his widow, Zenobia, succeeded to his power, and gradually extended her dominions by conquest or intrigue, till they stretched from Egypt to Armenia, and from Bithynia to the Euphrates. Gallienus died in 268; and his successor Claudius, though resenting Zenobia's independence, was too much occupied with the German tribes to take active measures against her. He was succeeded in 270 by Aurelian, the son of a Sirmian peasant, whom his own character and fortune had raised from the ranks. He reformed the discipline of the army, defeated the Goths, subdued a rising of the Alemanni on the Danube, and finally turned his arms against Zenobia. By conquest or treachery he mastered successively the towns of Asia Minor, defeated her and her general Zabdas in two battles, near Antioch and Emesa respectively, and at length shut her up behind the impregnable fortifications of her capital in the Palmyrene oasis. His demand for surrender was met by a defiant reply, written, it is said, by the Greek philosopher Longinus, who visiting Syria perhaps on family affairs—his mother was an Emesan—had been induced to

PREFATORY NOTE

act as the queen's tutor in Greek letters, and now occupied a position of high responsibility as her political adviser. But the return of Probus, who had been detached to conquer Egypt, enabled Aurelian to press the siege with greater vigour; and Zenobia, despairing of relief, effected her escape through the Roman lines, and rode on a fleet dromedary across the desert to the Euphrates, in the hope of rousing Persian succours. She was pursued, overtaken just as her boat was pushing off from the river-bank, and brought back prisoner to Aurelian's camp; her capture being speedily followed by the surrender of the city, A.D. 273. The queen at first maintained her defiant attitude; but yielding at last to fears inspired by the clamours of the soldiery, laid the blame of her resistance on Longinus and other of her counsellors, who were put to death at Emesa. She herself was conveyed to Rome, and compelled to walk, laden with jewels, in front of Aurelian's triumphal car. Her pride thus humbled, she was treated thereafter with clemency. Aurelian presented her with a handsome villa at Tibur, where she resided peaceably until her death.

Aurelian had hardly crossed into Europe on his homeward march, when news of a revolt of the Palmyrenes had induced him to return and inflict a terrible chastisement. Old men, women and children were included in the indiscriminate massacre, and the splendid buildings and temples of the city levelled with the ground. It was never rebuilt. Its magnificent remains were discovered in 1691, and are illustrated and described in the fine folio volume which records the results of the visit of Messrs. Wood and Dawkins in 1751. The latest record of Syrian exploration is the interesting *Palmyra and Zenobia* of Dr. William Wright (Nelson & Sons, 1895), whose long sojourn in the East may excuse him for forgetting that the claims of

PREFATORY NOTE

Zenobia's tutor, Longinus, to be the author of the famous treatise *On the Sublime* are questioned by modern scholarship. One cannot but share Mr. Lang's regret that the two can hardly be so identified; his tribute to the uncertain author of the treatise is most applicable to Aurelian's victim, "who carried the soul of a poet, the heart of a hero, under the gown of a professor. He was one of those whom books cannot debilitate, nor a life of study incapacitate for the study of life."¹

LONDON, *September* 30, 1898.

¹ Introduction to Mr. H. L. Havell's translation of *Longinus on the Sublime*, p. xxxi. The arguments about the authorship are summarized by Mr. Lang on pp. xvi.-xix. Opinion inclines to regard the author as a contemporary of Plutarch, in the first century A.D.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LONGINUS, *a Greek Philosopher, on a visit to Syria.*

ZABDAS, *General of the armies of Palmyra.*

SELEUCUS, *Cousin to Zenobia, and Pretender to the throne of Palmyra.*

FELIX,
GLABRIO, } *His freedmen and confidants.*

VABALATHUS, *Son of Zenobia.*

PAUL OF SAMOSATA, *Patriarch of Antioch.*

CLITUS, *an Emesan citizen of rank, cousin of Longinus.*

PARMENIO, *a Palmyrene Senator.*

MILO, *a Goth, slave to Longinus.*

ZACCHÆUS, *a Jewish Merchant.*

AURELIAN, *Emperor of Rome.*

MARCELLUS, *a noble Roman on a secret mission from Aurelian.*

PROBUS, *one of Aurelian's Generals.*

LUCIUS AGRIPPA, } *Roman Ambassadors.*
PETRONIUS, }

AN ARAB SHEIKH.

ZENOBIA, *Queen of Palmyra and the East, widow of Odenathus.*

DIONE, *daughter of Clitus and friend of Zenobia.*

MYRRHA (or ZILLAH), *a Hebrew slave, daughter of Zacchæus.*

ASTERIE, FLAVIA, ANTONIA, CLELIA, *and other Ladies of Zenobia's Court, Palmyrene Girls, Senators, Soldiers, Traders and Citizens of Palmyra, Roman Officers and Soldiers, Attendants, etc.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I. Scene. Glade in a Forest near Emesa.

ACT II. Scene I. The Great Square of Palmyra.

II. Hall in Zenobia's Palace.

ACT III. Scene I. Cabinet in Zenobia's Apartments.

II. The Walls of Palmyra.

III. A Rocky Ravine on the edge of the Oasis.

IV. The Desert near Corsote, on the Euphrates.

ACT IV. Scene I. Hall in Zenobia's Palace.

II. TABLEAU. The Great Square of Palmyra.

The action takes place in Syria, in the years 272-273 A.D. A year elapses between Acts I. and II., and six months between Acts III. and IV.

ACT I

SCENE.—*Glade in a forest near Emesa in Syria, disclosing a distant landscape, through which the Orontes wanders ; —the view crowned by the snowy summits of the Lebanon range. A noise of horns is heard. Enter CLITUS and LONGINUS : the former, considerably the elder, in short hunting-dress ; the latter, a man of some forty-five years, in a loose robe. Both carry hunting-spears.*

CLITUS. This is the place. If the game break this way
We cannot fail to see her, and at her best.
Zenobia shines a-hunting : 'tis the next
To that grim sport she loves even better—war.
Sure you remember this ? why, as a boy,
You knew these woods by heart.

LONGINUS. (*Shaking his head.*) Ay, but the mist
Of thirty years makes an uncertainty
Of what the boy loved best.

CLIT. And now you'll spare
A dozen meagre days ! Go you shall not !
Scarce have you shaken off the desert dust
That soiled you, posting here from Antioch
A fortnight since, and now to horse again ?

LONG. 'Tis use of time that makes it long or short.
We have not idled.

CLIT. Argument for stay !
These musty deeds and ancient testaments,
The buried world whose dust your coming stirred, ⁽¹⁾
Cheat us of common courtesies.

ACT I. SCENE I

LONG.

No, no !

Your hospitable warmth will make us churls
When Athens welcomes you. But you'd not guess
What nursery of impatient neophytes
Chafes at Longinus' absence, nor my fears
Lest others pay that toll of austere hours,
Which knowledge asks, to pleasure. I must go !

CLIT. Out on it, schoolmaster ! the Athenian youth
Will ne'er be lost for a month's holiday.
Forget not, ay, and make not them forget,
You were young once. And, to be serious,
Cousin, 'twere well your gravity cast eyes
On something whiter than a manuscript.
Emesa and Palmyra boast their fair.
Good chance if, following in his father's steps,
Longinus' choice should find in Syria
The pearl which Athens yielded not.

LONG.

You jest !

CLIT. Not a whit ! You are not urchin-proof. But stay,
And prove it false.

LONG. (*Half annoyed.*) This merry vein in Greece
Would furnish a week's laughter. One whose bark
Has long found rest in thought's still anchorage,
Lightly yields half his time, two-thirds of his goods,
And all his liberty, to the first fair face
Met on a holiday ! Sure the filching years
Bring compensating wisdom, that can read
The flattering legend in a woman's eyes,
And not become her plaything.—But you jest !
Let him who looks for wedded happiness
Marry in youth, like thee.

CLIT.

Be it as you will :

Yet you may stay awhile.—(*Aside.*) This bachelor vein

ACT I. SCENE I

Will ruin us yet ! 'Tis in the family.
Never a man of 'em but kicked and plunged
At the bare mention of't. Why, I myself—
(*Aloud.*) A welcome reinforcement !

(*Enter DIONE, in hunting dress and carrying spear.*)

Try your hand

Upon this obstinacy. Make him stay.

DIONE. Why ! must we spend a rivalry of tongues
To keep him, coming once to Syria—
Once in a life !—a jot beyond the space
A musty business craves ? What ! talk of going
Almost before he has dined and slept, before
His weary dromedary has drunk her fill
Or slipped her saddle-bags ? He tires of us !
We are simple, tedious folk !

LONG. What our worst foe
Could never credit, we may safely urge
Against ourselves.

DI. (*Curtseying.*) Compliment cannot save
The unheard-of solecism of such haste.
I have it ! 'Tis some demure Athenian's eyes,
Grown sore with crying ere this, poor little soul !
He must relieve her suffering.

LONG. Your fair self
Might keep me chained in Syria till I wore
Years and a gown more lightly, but I owe
Duty in Athens.

DI. Oh, these staid young men !
Whose only thought is study, who deplore
Their master's absence, actively resent
The injury of unlooked-for holidays !
I think I will not visit Athens yet !
Why didst not bring us an Athenian youth ?

ACT I. SCENE I

We would have shewn him as a specimen
Of rarest note, one strangely overlooked
By Pliny : you poke it gently with a pole,
Or turn it loose unto some pretty face ;
That makes it scuttle quickest.

CLIT. **Saucy girl !**

Ne'er heed her, Cassius. (*Horns in the distance.*)

Dio. **Hark ! they're found again !**

Come, father !

CLIT. Come along, Cassius ! (*Exeunt CLI. and DI., shouting. LONG. makes some steps to follow them, then stops, humorously contemplating the spear he carries.*)

LONG. Of small use

To one who scarce could handle it, and perhaps
Would not if he could ! One wretched brute the more
In the list of the day's victims, one more head
To glare in impotent ferocity

Over the feasting hall—so poor a prize

Mocks the expense of effort. (*Leans his spear against a tree-trunk, and seating himself at the foot, takes out a manuscript.*) Where was I?—Ah!

Where was I?—Ah!

(Begins reading, but very soon his attention wanders.)

Not "urchin-proof"? What folly! And I must needs

Loiter in Syria till some mincing jade,

Some poppet with a pair of pouting lips,

Or stalwart champion of this rebel-queen's—

The Amazon in chief—assuage my pains.

Reward a six months' dangling at her skirts

By robbing life henceforth of peace, kind thoughts,

Perchance fair fame ! What else is to expect

From marriage now? and how to learn again

The pretty tricks easy at twenty-five?—(*A pause.*)

Once, I remember, on an evening

ACT I. SCENE I

That drowned Cithæron's peaks in rosy light,
I met old Sophron's daughter coming down
The thyme-slopes of Hymettus, on her cheek
The flush of happy girlhood, in her hair
Rich store of glowing violets, herself
The violet of Athens, gentle, pure,
Sweet and clear-hearted as Ilissus' stream.
And o'er me, noting her fresh grace, sweet thoughts
Swept like a breeze of spring. Within a week
Was Sophron offering tears and sacrifice
To heedless gods for fair Alcmena's life !
She died.—Again, long after, at a feast,
Amid the flow of wine and witty talk,
Across the roses and the marble gleamed
The arresting magic of a rounded arm,
Uplifted to imprison a wilful tress
Strayed from the netted glory of a head
That turned, and met my gaze with lucent eyes
Deep as the blue Ægean ; and all my life
Leapt into passion for her womanhood !
It passed : she wedded with Callimachus,
And pleases now nor me, herself, nor him.
But now to love, now, in the mellowing year—
Ay ! doubtless I am grown the fitting mate
For birth, or beauty's drowned intelligence,
Whose emptiness conceives she condescends
Upon a bookman ; whose dull vanity
Deems him her dupe that stays to study her
Heedless of twistings ; whose poor stunted heart
Bows to the mask of things, and knows it not !
Heaven help a man from such !—What dreaming's this ?
A short month's truancy to play such tricks
Upon a sober brain ! Ay, I must home !—

ACT I. SCENE I

No more of it ! (*Resumes reading, and becomes absorbed.*

Enter L. hastily ZENOBIA, *a splendid brunette, whose beauty her thirty-five years of life have been quite unable to impair. She, too, is in hunting dress, and carries a spear.*)

ZEN. Did you see him ?

LONG. (*Without looking up.*) Eh ?

ZEN. (*Pausing, but still looking off R.*) The boar, man !
did you see him ?

He must have passed close here.

LONG. (*Not interested.*) Indeed.

ZEN. The glade

Is barred that end : he'll back this way, depend on't !

LONG. (*With much calm.*) I trust not.

ZEN. We shall have him ! Keep sharp look-out !
(*Dashes off R. LONG. continues his reading. After a short interval re-enter ZEN., breathless.*)

ZEN. We have missed him somehow !

LONG. (*Continuing his reading.*) Ah !

ZEN. (*Seating herself on a stump.*) The tiresome beast !

LONG. (*As before.*) Very.

ZEN. (*Observing him attentively for the first time—aside.*)

Some foreigner ! He knows me not.

(*Aloud.*) Why, sir, you are reading !

LONG. (*Looking up, mildly.*) Madam, that is so ;
I often do it.

ZEN. (*Pointing to his spear.*) Yet you came to hunt.

LONG. Did I ? Ah, to be sure—I must have done.
I am reading now. (*Resumes MS.*) ZEN. (*Amused.*) May I
know what you read ? (*Crosses and looks over his shoulder.*)

Greek ! why, 'tis Plato, is it not ?

LONG. Quite right.

I am fond of Plato.

ZEN. And which dialogue ?

ACT I. SCENE I

LONG. (*More interested.*) 'Tis the *Timæus*, where he deprecates Ambition.

ZEN. Ah! what does he say on that?

(*Crosses and re-seats herself.*)

LONG. He hasn't much opinion of it—indeed
Regards it as a toil, entangling men
Who might have risen to greatness.

ZEN. Might have risen!
The unambitious could not.

LONG. He would have
His ruler such as least desires to rule;
A lover of the shade, that must be forced
Into the chair of power, and disdains
To push and clamour for it.

ZEN. And do you hold
The teaching valid?

LONG. Surely.

ZEN. To what end
Should excellence hide itself? 'Twould deaden all
That lifts us from the brute—inaugurate
Chaos' recovered empire, leaving earth
A saddened waste of palsied impulses.
Such wisdom would have thrown to idleness
Parrhasius' brush, the tool of Pheidias;
Ne'er had the canvas burned or marble breathed—
Art could have found no utterance! then in deed
Had darkness veiled the lamp of Homer's orbs,
A silence sealed the fount of Sophocles,
And left the music of the world unsung.
Then had our gorgeous Temple of the Sun,
Where entering now, the lowliest Palmyrene
Feels on his brow some breath of majesty,

ACT I. SCENE I

Slept in Ariston's soul, a formless dream !
Nay, Earth herself, this glorious theatre,
Forest and soaring peak and sounding sea,
Sending its jubilant universal shout
Into His ears who made it, ne'er had risen
Perfection from the abyss.

LONG. (*Regarding her critically.*) Yes, you plead well !
But 'tis not Art he speaks of, though even there
His thought divined a sophistry—mere shows,
Shadows distorting truth ! He speaks of life,
Mourning in all the votaries of power
The blight of nobler thoughts.

ZEN. A nemesis
Of power ill-got ! But all power is not so.
Think what the world owes to this potent spur,
This sovereign scorn of common victories,
This glow of the heart, this fire in the brain, this star
That beacons forth on lonely pilgrimage,
Cheer of dull days, lamp of the toilsome nights,
Bright wreath of an imperial desire
That, woven about long years of drudgery,
Transfigures them to glory ! Not from those
Meshed in the silken fetters of content,
From cunning self-belittlers, or sleek souls
That quake for cavil of an envious tongue,
Comes the great thought that thunders at men's hearts—
The glorious act, parent of thousand acts
That roll a trumpet-note about the world—
The life that leaves a darkness and a cry,
Telling that on Earth's bitter coast, where all
That's fair and noble withers, there has shone
The very gleam of godhead.

LONG.

Deity

ACT I. SCENE I

Shines of itself, without the smoky glare
Lent by ambition's torch ; that but o'erclouds
The milder radiance.

ZEN. (*Impatiently.*) 'Tis lucky, sir,
Zenobia hears you not.

LONG. Zenobia
Is never like to hear me. Kings and queens
Set such high rate upon philosophy,
They keep it locked from use.

ZEN. (*Passionately.*) What chemic skill
Can make assay of hearts? Surely her sway
Is not all selfish? In our Persian wars,
When Rome lay helpless, Odenathus rose,
Gathered the desert-horsemen round himself,
Chased the invader back to Ctesiphon,
And reigned henceforward undisputed king
Over the realm he rescued. Was not this
The fair, inevitable consequence
Of that brave action? Hence Zenobia's power!
And, did you know Palmyra, you would call
Her people happy, prosperous—you would see
How from their loyal pride nobility
Wells up as from a fountain, making them
A race of heroes, great in art and arms.
Such surely is the rule that Plato loved,
Even though engrossed by one!

LONG. It may be so :
I know not. Is it unselfishness or pride
That decks her son in the purple,^(?) and invites
The emperor's vengeance for prerogatives
Thus openly invaded?

ZEN. (*Aside.*) 'Tis too much!
(*Aloud.*) Who are you, sir, that thus presume to judge

ACT I. SCENE I

Palmyra's policy? Why is she not
 Worthy to rival Rome, whose arm can school
 Rome's conqueror? Makes not Sapor even now
 His footstool of a captive emperor,⁽⁸⁾
 While Italy's craven Senate smiles or sleeps,
 Or smarts, save for Zenobia, unavenged?
 Let Romans grudge the sway they could not keep;
 The breastplate of the empire is its peer!

LONG. In Gallienus' time, or Claudius', ay!
 To-day the sceptre feels a mightier grasp.
 Aurelian will never share his power
 Even with Zenobia, as your fiery queen
 Will learn perchance too late.

ZEN. (*With a burst of anger.*) Now by the gods
 Schooling awaits Aurelian's pride, not hers!
 And you, sir Oracle—(*She checks herself, and gazes fixedly*
at LONGINUS.)

(*Aside.*) Why should I be wroth?
 He speaks of what he knows, Rome and her power:
 Palmyra he knows not, and cannot guess
 The measure of that ignorance.

(*Horns again in the distance. She rises.*)

(*Aloud.*) Meanwhile
 You will allow us, sir, to dine and sleep
 Much as before, I trust. I am rested now,
 And must rejoin her highness. Fare you well,
 Unless we meet at Court.

LONG. (*Also rising.*) Madam, farewell! (*With re-*
covered dignity she goes slowly out.)
 And to a comely disputant! What fire
 Shone in her words, her looks! This Syrian queen
 May plead excuse for pride, if she herself
 Outshine her women. What if 'twere herself?

ACT I. SCENE I

Zenobia !—that imperiousness—the touch
 Half scornful, as of one unused to plead !
 Dullard, not to have guessed ! Yet, if I had,
 What sugared phrase of courtesy could instil
 The lesson that must storm a royal ear
 Or drop unheeded ? Better as it is,
 Save for some touch of bitterness, perchance,
 That ever arms the hearer 'gainst itself.
 Am I grown sour ? Almost she made me feel
 Thersites, snarling at an excellence
 Beyond himself ! Well, I spoke truth, no more :
 The event concerns me not. To-morrow, then,
 For Antioch, and so to Greece ! I have strayed
 Too far afield, and stayed too long ! These eyes
 Are cloister-weak, and dazzle in the sun :
 They must to shade again : they have their task,
 One that lies wide enough of queens and courts,
 And statecraft, though 'tis tortuous too, like that :
 Work like the mole's, that patient engineer,
 Who labours in the dark with none to heed,
 Ignorant of his own futility,
 Still pushing on his winding weariness
 Untired, until the winter, hardening down,
 Numbs him ; and all his idle tunnelling,
 His empty, unintelligible maze,
 Lies darkling ; and at length some whistling hind
 With idly-curious implement lays bare
 The painful labyrinth, and stares, and laughs,
 And stamps it out indifferent.

*(Re-enter ZENOBIA, CLITUS, and DIONE, together with VABA-
 LATHUS, ZABDAS, SELEUCUS, GLABRIO, BISHOP OF
 ANTIOCH, and other courtiers, huntsmen, etc.)*

VAB.

'Twas my spear !

ACT I. SCENE I

The brute is mine, let him deny it who dare !
I smote him fairly, as one day I'll smite
Rome and her peasant emperor.

SELEU. (*Sneeringly—aside to GLAB.*) Kingly spoke !
Verily, Glabrio, our unkind thoughts
Have slandered our fair cousin : that last touch
Was the right Odenathus !

GLAB. (*Aside—in same tone.*) I confess
A kind of braggart likeness !

ZEN. (*To VABALATHUS.*) Gentle son,
Your valour is not questioned : 'tis assumed
In Odenathus' race ; and 'tis more wise
For power to make no promise till it grasp
The instrument of performance,—nay, to make
Action the heir of its resolve, not words ;
So, keeping silence till the action's ripe,
No enemy forestalls our purposes ;
And, if ill-fortune beggar our intent,
No creditor insults our bankruptcy,
Being unknown.—We have had sport enough
To-day : now, home ! To-morrow to Palmyra !
And to you, fair one (*to DI.*), we'll be mendicant
For company thither. You are no stranger here. (*Hand-
ing DIONE to her ladies.*)
Clitus, we have your leave ?

(CLIT., *who has been conferring with LONG., now comes for-
ward with him.*)

CLIT. Your highness heaps
Our house with such an ever-growing debt,
As service comes too short of ; so I yield
Dione, though methinks the headstrong girl
Were better plague her father still at home.

ACT I. SCENE I

But here is weightier offering, one whose fame
(*Presenting* LONG.) Is loud already in your highness' ears,
Cassius Longinus.⁽⁴⁾

ZEN. (*Recognising him.*) Our philosopher !
Indeed we are no strangers.

LONG. (*With a low reverence.*) But unless
Your highness can be generous, I must wish
We had remained so.

ZEN. Nay, sir, no excuse !
Your speech at least was honest ; and a queen
Must often purchase truth at such a rate,
As makes her prize the gift of it ! Welcome, sir !
Your name is apt upon our Syrian tongues
As that of Plato's self, though hitherto
Athens, a niggard of her opulence,
Hath spared you not to visit Syria.

LONG. A lack of opportunity, not will.

ZEN. Being here, we keep you, sir. Philosophy
Never condemns unheard ; and our poor East,
Barbarous long, and neighbour to the night,
Hath in four centuries of Europe's rule
Taken the tinge of dawn, the touch of art.
Our progress ended, we are now for home.
Our palace at Palmyra holds perchance
Some statue, or a gem, or manuscript
Worth even Longinus' notice.

LONG. Else 'twere strange !
Palmyra is the story of the world.
Even Rome confesses there a grace that sends
Her dignity of centuries to school,
And makes her in her famous seven-hilled seat
Some Scythian metropolis.

ZEN. (*Smiling.*) Why now

ACT I. SCENE I

How idle seem our momentary qualms
At your Athenian severity,
Your snarling Cynic candour,—hearing thus
The Cyrenaic honey, the smooth tongue
Of Aristippus, flowing from that mouth
On whose least word attentive Athens hangs!
But you must school us further.

LONG. I am ashamed
Of so ungracious answer, but each hour
Rebukes my truancy, each moment calls
Loudly to Greece.

ZEN. Come, I must change your plans.

(ZEN. and LONG. retire up.)

CLIT. (To SELEUCUS.) Tut, sir, what matter for a girl's
sharp speech?
They will be ever uttering such light coin,
Unstamped, unminted.

SEL. Ay, and a man's repute
Is the mere target of their tattling tongues,
If he forget to unbonnet, or omit
Some silly phrase, or dare indifference
To a smirched and painted face!

CLIT. Pooh! and what then?
Character lies not in their estimate.

DI. Why, what's the tale about Seleucus now?

ASTERIE. His lordship's name is ever in our mouths.

FLAVIA. We seldom speak of any other theme.

ANTONIA. The Court without that subject would be dull
As a Sarmatian winter. Heaven forbid
He should forsake us.

CLELIA. Hush! don't speak of it!
Our cynosure, our model! on whose lips
We hang, indoors; whose litter, in the street,

ACT I. SCENE I

Is our pursuit ; whose every gesture teems
With hints of grace for us !

ASTERIE. Why, but for that
We seldom stir abroad, except perchance
For shoe or fan whose shape or shade he affects :
We dress by his direction.

FLAVIA. That is why
Yellow and green are worn now.

CLITUS. How many more?
Rescue, my lord of Antioch !

BISHOP OF ANTIOCH. (*Advancing to the group.*) Pardon me,
Ladies, Seleucus is not understood ;
His honesty's his foe.

SEL. (*Bitterly.*) Ay, call a priest
When women have the colic ! 'Tis well known
The bishop has the sweetest devotees
Among his flock at Antioch. (*Turns angrily away.*)

BR. OF ANT. Abroad
Seleucus must be plain ; but in his house
He is politeness' pink, the school of form ;
He stabbed a slave of his the other day
Only for sneezing when he spoke. The rogue
Was dense enough to die, and never thanked
Seleucus for his lesson !—Flavia,
When do you visit Antioch ? (*Retires with FLA.*)

DIONE. (*To ZABDAS, who is watching ZEN. and LONG.*)
My lord,

Zabdas !

ZAB. (*Aside.*) Another of these subtle Greeks !
We shall be all philosophers anon,
Scholiasts, sophists ! 'twill be a defect
To speak what may be merely understood :
A man must tease and twist and turn his phrase

ACT I. SCENE I

As 'twere a whipster's top.

DI. (*Louder.*) Good day, my lord!

ZAB. (*Still unheeding.*) Plague on the dainty trick of it!
I think

If Plato's ghost should whisper her, she'd change
Sceptre for staff, and toss her crown away.
Since words became the only currency,
Plain soldier goes for naught!

DI. (*Mortified.*) Well, I must choose
Some other time.

ZAB. (*Starting.*) Pardon me! I forget!

DI. Where is your greeting for a three years' friend
Not seen for twice three months?

ZAB. Pardon, again.
I was lost in—nothing! How goes time with you?

DI. Why, when at home a lady dreams of court;
At court, perchance of home.

ZAB. (*Absently.*) You travel with us?

DI. (*Impatiently.*) What can it signify? When may
we look

For your Zenobiad? You will turn poet, sure!
But, follow that theme—farewell our general!

ZAB. (*Coldly.*) I read no riddles, and for poetry
I have some native incapacity
That guarantees my soldiership.

ZEN. (*Coming down with LONG.*) Too keen!
Nor have we any remedy but yourself.
Come, you remain with us. Our manifold cares
Make Plato strange of late: your kindly aid
Shall make us friends again, and you can learn
Our Syriac.

LONG. Nay, nay! it cannot be;
Though the refusal's a discourtesy

ACT I. SCENE I

That irks me sorely.

(*Enter MILO with a letter.*)

Milo! have you news?

Madam, his face seems urgent: with your leave.

(*Reads letter apart, ZENOBIA seating herself on a fallen tree-trunk.*)

ZAB. 'Tis ever thus with these philosophers!
They cannot eat, nor pass the time of day,
Hardly so much as nod, but some affair
Levies a tax on such frivolities,
And with a scant "Pardon, dear sir!" they stand,
Lips pursed, brows bent, Deliberation's self,
Stroking a length of untrimmed beard, while we
Plain folk who do the business of the world
May kick our heels and whistle!

ZEN. To a tune
Not over charitable! Have you heard
Of Sapor stirring, Egypt in revolt,
Or Pontus, that you cannot spare our guest
Time for a letter? Are we back at school,
To have our hours so numbered?

LONG. (*To ZENOBIA.*) I have news
Of gravest import, news that touch yourself:
So please you for the matter's sake to excuse
Familiar phrase, read, madam.

ZEN. What you hold
Important, shall command our scrutiny.

(*Reads.*) "Phronto of Athens⁽⁵⁾ to his nephew Dionysius Cassius Longinus sends greeting.—You had barely been gone a week when there sailed into the Piræus five hundred vessels of the barbarians. Our walls being in ruins, they captured the city almost without resistance, and the seat of the Muses was in the hands of the Goths! The

ACT I. SCENE I

opportunity was not to be lost. Forthwith they ransacked the libraries and rummaged every corner for books, and piling them all in the middle of the agora, were about to set them alight when some wiseacre suggested that, without books, we might betake ourselves to arms. Picture your aged and corpulent relative exercising as a hoplite! But we cannot be too thankful for this old idiot; and I have vowed three talents to Athena, on your account. The precious manuscripts were spared; and by diligent search I have recovered ours. Indeed, our library seems somewhat fuller than before, but I shall lodge no complaint about this. A week later Dexippus with some peasants burnt and sunk many of their ships; moreover, the Emperor, who is of an incredible celerity, was rumoured to be moving; so they drew off into Thrace. But all lectures have ceased, and nothing but drill is going forward. You cannot protect us, and would certainly be captured by the Goths, for the Ægean swarms with them. Stay with the excellent Clitus, and commend me to him. Your treatises are safe, except some leaves of your last answer to Plotinus, which Lyce, the cook, had got hold of for her pastry and quince preserves. The cheesecakes, however, are not seriously the worse.

“Cleodamus, the Emperor’s engineer, sent hither by the Gulf, reports that Aurelian, when he has subdued the Goths, purposes marching into Asia with all his force—his object as yet unknown. A man, I hear, who will do all things for himself!—see, judge, speak, act for himself! and Emperor too! Was ever one so insensible of the good gifts of Providence? But there is disturbance also at Rome.

“The gods preserve your health and appetite. Don’t forget to have Milo soundly flogged at proper intervals. Farewell!”

ACT I. SCENE I

(*Returning letter to LONGINUS.*)

A heavy freight for such a bark ! This news
 Will lend our Council-board a gravity
 Would make your uncle yawn.—(*Aside.*) Rumour of Goths
 Passed in Ancyra, but I marked it not.
 An eastern expedition, and no word
 To us ! He is secret, then, as well as swift.
 And yet, what matters it ? Zenobia,
 Who sways the East from Nile to Caucasus,
 Need never blench, even though decrepit Rome,
 Awaking from her sleep of twenty years,
 Snarl like an old and toothless lioness
 Who, from that cave, so dreaded once, beholds
 Upland and plain, her ancient territory,
 Ranged with free foot by all the forest tribes ;
 And glares, and loathes her impotence ; till at last,
 Pinched by dire famine, she essays with pain
 Some feeble sally, by her agile foes
 Eluded easily, and anon limps home,
 Hunger and wrath unsatisfied, to die !—
 (*Aloud.*) Zabdas, thine ear ! Is Sapor or ourself
 The threatened mark ?

ZAB. Palmyra, madam ! yet
 The tale may be invented to amuse
 Seditious Italy ; for hardly yet
 Is he firm-seated in the imperial chair.
 Trouble at home, the ravage of the Goths,
 And on the north the brooding thunder-cloud
 Of Germany, ever threatening to pour
 War in a torrent down the Alpine sides :
 These should suffice !

ZEN. Ay, ay !

ZAB. And these suppressed,

ACT I. SCENE I

His fainting arms o'erleap the Bosphorus
To meet on Asian fields your unbreathed hosts,
Your bows, your steel-clad horse : in the last resort
Palmyra, with her bursting granaries,
Bristling with engines, walled impregnably,
Set in a smiling paradise that yields
Its fruits and waters freely to her sons,
But, past the verdurous circle of her palms,
Encompassed by a mighty solitude,
A waste of whirling sand and whitening bones.
What need we fear ?

ZEN. Truly 'tis idle. (*Flourish without.*) Hark !
(*Enter ATTENDANT.*)

ATTEND. Lucius Agrippa and Petronius,
Ambassadors from the emperor, request
Audience.

ZEN. Conduct them hither. (*Exit ATTENDT.*) Now
will our doubts
Be satisfied.

(*Re-enter ATTENDT. with AGRIPPA and PETRONIUS.*)

AGRIP. Zenobia, we are charged
With Augustus' greeting. Till the Goths receive
Due chastisement, the East must still lament
The imperial neglect ; but he demands,
Making no question of your willingness,
Your contribution of ten thousand troops
To meet him at the Hæmus. Hearing, too,
Of a seditious bishop, Paul, who fills⁽⁶⁾
The office of ducenary, he desires
You would refuse him further countenance,
Tendering the general weal, in Italy
As here.

(*A pause. Then ZEN. speaks in a quiet, musing voice.*)

ACT I. SCENE I

ZEN. Good Lucius, does the Emperor
Read much ?

AGRIP. (*Surprised.*) I know not, madam.

ZEN. (*Same quiet tone.*) His affairs

With Goths, and Germans, and Italian priests
Leave him, we fear, scant leisure for those arts
Which cheat our day : he has not heard, perhaps,
A certain fable that we call to mind,
In Æsop or Demetrius—how once
A wood-cutter in mortal fear of the lion
Contrived, on some pretence of friendliness,
To draw his teeth and cut his claws ; that done,
Cudgelled him at his pleasure.

AGRIP. Gracious queen !
This is no answer.

ZEN. (*With a bitter laugh.*) Truly 'tis a tale
Incredible, wild, not worth your master's ear.
(*Sternly.*) Carry this answer to Aurelian.

(*The scene gradually darkens, the sky becoming overcast.*)
Since Sapor chased Rome's armies oversea,
Palmyra has forgotten to expect
An emperor's visit ; unneeded, while she stands
To front his enemy. How good Bishop Paul
Can trouble Italy is not made clear ;
Therefore he keeps his office. As for troops,
Asia is threatened by the tide of Goths
No less than Europe ; Sapor on the east
Asks vigilance ; and we may have to meet
Foes yet more dangerous. (*Rising.*) Tell the emperor
Zenobia loves her warriors too well
To spill their blood upon a chance request ;
Say that she needs not yet its outpouring
Upon the slopes of Hæmus ; when she does,

ACT I. SCENE I

She'll send no petty quota, but with all
The Orient's gathered valour march herself
To share their perils and their victories.
Before that, not a man !

(Resumes her seat amid murmurs of applause from the Palmyrenes : then seeing the Ambassadors stand in silent amazement, she adds.)

You are answered, sirs.

AGRIP. *(Rousing himself.)* And may the gods forefend
the consequence,
Most fatal else ! Zenobia can foresee
The effect of this ?

ZEN. *(Proudly.)* There's none she needs to fear !

AGRIP. Then, since our task's so speedily discharged—

ZEN. Nay, Lucius ! Lucius ! the cold courtesy
We must deem fitting for your master's pride,
Extends not to his messenger. Leave us not
In angry haste : but let some gentler hours
Redeem our forced ungraciousness.

AGRIP. A charge
Most strict forbids.

BOTH AMB. We humbly take our leave.

(They salute her, and exeunt. As they go out, SELEUCUS calls GLABRIO aside and whispers him.)

SEL. *(Aside to GLABRIO.)* Follow the legates quickly ;
say there's yet

A further message : bid them not depart
Till they have seen myself.

[Exit GLABRIO.]

ZEN. *(To ZABDAS.)* Have I done well ?

ZAB. Most like your royal self, and therefore well.

ZEN. *(To SELEUCUS.)* Seleucus ?

SEL. Why ! your highness burned for war,
And now you have it.

ACT I. SCENE I

ZEN. (*To LONGINUS.*) And you, our newest friend ?

LONG. Madam, I must not blame, I dare not praise.
Danger is not yet imminent ; when it nears—

ZEN. We shall know how to meet it ! Meantime, sir,
—Almost we might command ; but, since our writ
Runs not as yet across the Hellespont,
We will entreat—your company to beguile
Our desert-march. Once in our capital,
Be master of your leisure, and to ours
Ever most welcome.

LONG. (*Slowly and gravely.*) Can your highness grant
That in all days to come, whate'er may chance,
I shall be free to speak as fearlessly,
And you will heed as closely, as to-day ?

ZEN. (*After a pause.*) Yes, I will promise that.

LONG. Then I will come.

(*He kneels and kisses her hand.*)

The great gods shelter you !

ZEN. (*Passionately—face and arm uplifted to the darkened sky.*) They will ! They do !

(*A long low roll of thunder is heard as the CURTAIN falls.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II

[A year has passed.]

SCENE I.—PALMYRA. *The great square. The Portico of the Temple of the Sun, of Corinthian order, is visible on the right. On the steps leading up to it are ranged a body of Priests of the Sun, facing the sunrise. A band of youths and maidens kneel upon the lower steps. Other buildings visible, of white marble richly decorated with columns and carving, standing among palm-trees. The stage is occupied by Palmyrene traders setting up trestle-booths, who arrest their work while the Priests sing the*

MORNING HYMN

King ! whose throne is boundless sky,
Traveller of eternity !

Power ! whose animating heat
Bids life's every pulse to beat ;
Moving 'mid the burning throng,
Prince of Light and fount of Song,
Be our vows to thee addressed,
Purest, strongest, loveliest !

Ageless Lamp, whose daily birth
Age on age hath gladdened earth,
Whose wide kiss hath newly pressed
Dome and wave and mountain-crest—
Spare to youth its crown of flowers,
Gild those unreturning hours !
Youthful feet may lightly stray :
Strong Path-keeper ! guard their way.

ACT II. SCENE I

King ! that travellest on high,
All lies open to thine eye :
Shed thy day in darkened heart,
Medicine all its hidden smart.
In thy hand lies every gift ;
To thy beam our prayer we lift :
Shower upon us all thy best,
Purest, strongest, loveliest !

(The Priests retire into the Temple, and the traders resume their work.)

1ST TRAD. *(A fruitseller, lazily arranging booth.)* Good day, Demetrius.

2ND TRAD. *(Ditto, similarly, but energetically, employed—to his boy.)* Now, Ganio, stir about ! *(Carelessly to 1ST TRAD.)* Ah ! good day, good day ! *(To boy.)* Run the awning up to shelter those peaches.

1ST TRAD. Well now, if you *ask* me, a touch of sun'd be a real kindness to that lot. *(In a loud aside to another trader.)* Hie, Ctesipho ! there's a man will be in the Senate before he's fifty ; or else the cemetery. Look you there ! Flesh and blood'll never stand it. *(Contemplates DEM's activity with arms akimbo.)*

3RD TRAD. Where's Chremes ? Isn't the commission back from Aphāca ? ⁽⁷⁾

4TH TRAD. Back last night.

3RD TRAD. How fared the offering ?

4TH TRAD. Ill enough : robes and cups floated, instead of sinking. They stayed a week over time, making sacrifice to Venus ; but 'twas no use. Something must have angered the goddess.

1ST TRAD. Well, we must kiss Glauce and Lycoris the harder ! That's the complaint I make against fellows like

ACT II. SCENE I

Demetrius : they shirk these duties. So selfish ! I'd have this sort of thing made penal.

(*Enter various Citizens : traders retire to their several booths. Enter CLITUS and PARMENIO, a Senator, meeting.*)

PARM. What ! Clitus ? old friend Clitus ! What brings you here ?

CLIT. What moves old men to marry ? what is't draws
The pensioned soldier to the barrack-house,
The merchant to his late-forsaken desk,
But sickness of their own society ?
My girl flaunts it at Court, so I am come
To Court to see her ; which I have not yet,
Being but newly come.

PARM. All's well with her :
As pretty a shrew as ever ! and of late
Her train receives addition, one from Rome
Here on some trading venture, or, some say,
A mission from the emperor—I know not ;
But his eyes follow your daughter.

CLIT. How is he called ?

PARM. Marcellus.

CLIT. He is like to lose his pains.
Romans are poison to a girl who holds
Zenobia and Palmyra the sole themes
Of admiration : and Dione's mark
Lies nearer. 'Twixt ourselves, she is set, or was,
On Zabdas.

PARM. Zabdas ! he thinks not of her :
But, 'twixt ourselves again, adores the queen
With something more than subject loyalty.

CLIT. So ? We shall see, we shall see ! What of my
kinsman ?
How suits his gravity with Court ?

ACT II. SCENE I

PARM.

Longinus ?

Why, this recluse who came, methinks, to read
Homer and Plato in her garden-house,
Speaks with a potent voice that shakes the realm,
And holds such charge of state that Zabdas swears
A gown's the only wear in politics,
Swords are become too cheap.

CLIT.

I hear as much.

PARM. Nay, more—'tis yet a whisper, but men think
The Athenian destined to a happiness
She has denied to kings !

CLIT. (*Musingly.*)

'Tis possible.

'Tis said her husband had her loyalty,
Never her heart—she gave him heirs, not children !
Passion is yet to come.

PARM.

Certain I am

His word outweighs all others' : without him
Our bellicose senators pant for war in vain.
As yet he favours peace ; but therein stands
Alone, except for Gabryas, myself,
And some half-dozen.

CLIT.

And Aurelian ?

PARM. That is our puzzle—nothing sure of late :
Men's talk reports him somewhere in the East ;
But 'tis a point of wisdom to neglect
Those flying rumours which the Arab horse,
Authors in part of news they long to hear,
Gather along the desert-verge, or glean
In Antioch or Edessa : and hardly yet
Can Rome be pacified. We need not stir.

CLIT.

You are too secure. Men say the emperor's hand
Dogs his design at heel, and makes it one
With the act it fathers. The obscure delays

ACT II. SCENE I

Of such are full of threats. Aurelian's taste
For intrigue was shown at Milan.⁽⁸⁾ But Seleucus?

PARM. Why, he is turned the prince's courtier,
And vents no more the vinegar that soured
Zenobia's sweeter temper. The last news
Is his new honours : he is given command
Next Zabdas' self.

CLIT. And Zabdas jealous?

PARM. No !

I think 'tis Zabdas' doing, who intends
Some counterpoise to the increasing weight
Longinus carries : there's the latest mark
Of Zabdas' jealousy.

CLIT. Zabdas is more like
To prove Seleucus' instrument than he
The tool of Zabdas. Two months since I heard
He has an Alexandrian following
Too mighty in a subject. Since that time
'Tis strange I have no letters.

PARM. And more strange
That the report Zenobia's vigilance
Takes of the province monthly is delayed.
But see—Dione ! and my business calls.
Your servant, fair one !

(Exit after saluting DIONE—who enters.)

DI. Father !

CLIT. (*Embracing her.*) Why, my girl,
Emesa grew too dull, so I took horse,
And find you—well, a trifle peaked and pale.
This life is not too wearying, too gay?

DI. Oh no, dear father.

CLIT. You wore fresher looks
A year ago.

ACT II. SCENE I

DI. Why, I was younger then
By a whole year.

CLIT. (*Caressing her.*) That is profoundly true.
The hard anxieties that come with age
Have doubtless filched the colour from thy cheek,
As they have partly robbed me of the joy
Of thy once-frequent letters. But I came not
To chide. Say, how is Myrrha? Has she found
Her father in Palmyra?

DI. I hear not so ;
Though she still speaks of Alexandrian days
And of Jerusalem, and weeps at whiles,
Yet she'll forget.

CLIT. Forget? Ay, ay, the mode !
What should a father do but be forgotten?

DI. Now you are cross ! but I'll not have you cross.
Know, sir, your daughter is admired ! they've shipped
Hither from Rome a walking post, whose talk
Tramps like a senatorial decree,
Measured and ponderous, pausing now and then
To catch the gust of its own gravity.
Antiquity's epitome ! who coughs
Distinctly Decian, smiles as Cato might,
—Catonian humour never reached a laugh !—
And wears his toga with a clumsiness
Recalling Cincinnatus and the plough.
See him stroke his chin, or blow his nose, you catch
A fine old flavour of the Sabine war !
He eats his dinner like a marble god
Laid on the cushions at a festival,
But with less appetite. 'Tis maddening !
The creature's one long creak, and cries aloud
For a crow's feather and a little oil.

ACT II. SCENE I

I helped him to some Indian pepper once :
He sneezed five minutes—'twas a week at least.
Ere he regained the Roman.

CLIT. Saucy girl !
And shameful slander ! this same quiet bears
A rate above the scented insolence
Of fifty fashion-mongers.—But he's noble,
And high in favour with the emperor.

Dr. Sure, sir, you jest : Marcellus ne'er drew sword
Nor filled an office. 'Tis on merchandise
Or tribute-pickings that he thrives, a thing
Of figures, ledgers, money-bags, himself
A cipher. See for yourself. Yonder he comes
In conference with Seleucus. Do but mark
His cowed, obsequious air. We'll not be seen.

(Draws CLIT away to back and exeunt as enter SELEU. with MARCELLUS, who seat themselves R. C. and converse in low tones.)

SEL. That, sir, is the position. As you know (*looks cautiously round*)
I am wholly with the emperor, though as yet
I must not so appear. Without a war
Zenobia sits unshaken, and bequeaths
To Vabalàthus all the usurpèd East ;
Beside whose vice his mother's tyranny
Will show like Saturn's rule. Destroy them both,
—That method's always safe—and reabsorb
In the Empire's bosom her lost provinces,
Placed 'neath the single rule of one we trust.
He is not far to seek.

MARC. Yourself, of course?

SEL. (*With a shrug.*) Aurelian knows my service. Further proof

ACT II. SCENE I

Awaits him with the war. Let him not waste
His strength on Egypt: when Palmyra yields,
Egypt will follow.

MARC. He shall know as much.

But how to requite your courtesies—

SEL. (*Effusively.*) A trifle!

One so discreet and brave might count on me.

(*Scans him narrowly.*) Nothing to what I would do!—Tell
me now,

'Twixt friend and friend, how is your emperor loved

In turbulent Rome? we hear but little of him:

A festive spirit, eh? a merry soul,

That loves a wench and his Falernian?⁽⁹⁾

MARC. (*Reserved tone.*) I hear of no excess.

SEL. (*Deprecatory air.*) Of course not, no!

But genial and popular, a friend

Of the common soldier?

MARC. (*Driily.*) He keeps discipline.

SEL. Oh, doubtless; a great general! something rough

And harsh at times, perhaps. I call to mind

That gamesome legionary he crucified,⁽¹⁰⁾

Gathering the stubborn branches of an oak

So that, their bonds released, they wrenched away

Each its own ghastly portion—horrible!

Such acts breed disaffection, do they not?

MARC. I noticed none in this case.

SEL. Loyally spoke!

But come, this is private—we are friends! no doubt

He is severe to a fault: witness the Jews,

Branded and flogged and mulcted heavily

After the late revolt.⁽¹¹⁾ This truculent mood,

Though it allay the state's disorders, leaves

Its festering scars. "Hand-to-Sword" is not loved⁽¹²⁾

Save in the army?

ACT II. SCENE I

MARC. (*Losing patience.*) Sir, I cannot tell.

SEL. Well, well—a strong physician, which Rome needs.
No more revolts, I take it? holds his own?
What do you make his utmost strength?

MARC. (*Curtly.*) Enough
To govern with : not more.

SEL. But with what force
Will he assail Palmyra?

MARC. There you ask
What's past my knowledge.

SEL. (*Rising.*) Well, sir, fortunate days!
(*Lower tone*) And should you find convenient means to
send

—In private—tidings of your emperor's health,
With what security he bears himself,
And—so forth, I shall serve you.—(*Aside*) A close knave,
Not to be sifted!—(*Aloud*) Hither comes the queen :
I must not tarry with you. (*Exit SEL. R.*)

MARC. What a price
Of quaking doubt, and hesitating stealth
Is paid by such a villain! How far short
Does treachery's harvest fall of recompense
For the free footstep and the dreadless brow,
The careless liberty of unfeigned speech,
The inalienable music of the heart,
Which traitors needs must forfeit! Surely here
(*Enter ZEN., LONG., and train R. C.*)
An honest service might find happy meed,
Even in a losing quarrel.—I must make
One effort yet.

(*Rises and approaches ZENOBI.*)

Madam, let gratitude
For queenly favour and fair welcome given,

ACT II. SCENE I

Plead my excuse for importunity.
I would be serviceable. Though I bear
No mandate or commission, yet I know
The emperor's mind herein. Be well assured
Nor Gallienus reigns, nor Claudius,
But one whose resolution dwarfs them both.

ZEN. (*Impatiently.*) 'Tis but the former tale! your
fears, my lord,
Are quite unshared by us.

LONG. Nay, madam, hear.

MARC. You do not know the Emperor! one not apt
To note each trifle, but, his anger roused,
Implacable! Lady, these eyes have seen
Death riding on the blast of the simoom
That heaves your deserts in a weltering sea
Of fiery billows, summoning the might
Of giant pillars to patrol the waste
And mix its sands with heaven: even so
Awakes Aurelian's wrath! and as beneath
The whirlwind's fury sinks the caravan,
The heavy-laden camels, toiling slaves,
The trader with his riches and his hopes,
All overwhelmed!—far off in Persian marts
The merchants meet and talk of them, and pile
Rich gems and silken stuffs of Samarcand,
Waiting their coming; but they come no more!—
Even so Palmyra must be blotted out,
Tossed like a leaf upon the hurricane,
'Whelmed 'neath the weight of Rome! Beseech you, pause.

ZEN. Your desert simile may be vigorous:
'Tis far from apt. Palmyra has a strength
Undreamed in Italy; native, and allied,
In Persia—while the countless masts that swing

ACT II. SCENE I

In Alexandrian harbours, sent to sea,
Will threaten Rome with famine.

MARC. Italy
Is not devoid of shipwrights : there are yards
At Ostia, at Ravenna—

ZEN. (*Interrupting.*) Sir, you mean
A kindness, doubtless ; but the theme is dull :
Nay, it offends. Who can feel gratitude
Amid the smart and tingling of a blow,
Even when medicinal ? Let the counsellor
Beware such lack of judgment in himself
As underrates the friend he thinks to guide,
And makes advice an insult. Plead no more.

(*Exeunt ZEN. and train L.*)

MARC. (*Approaching LONG, who is following.*) Spare
me one word, my lord.

LONG. (*Curtly.*) Well, sir ?

MARC. I know
Your influence. You are said to favour peace :
Can you secure it ? will her stubbornness
Be pushed to the point of war, your vote withheld ?

LONG. (*After a pause.*) I think it will not.

MARC. Can you pledge yourself
To win her to the Emperor's fair demands ?

LONG. No, meddling Roman, I will give no pledge !
What ! seal my promise to a blank of terms
Proffered by an unchartered busybody ?
'Twould well beseem Zenobia's minister !
Make such a motion to some needy slave
With a keen nose for a bribe, who thinks it cheap
To pawn his honour for some broken meats ;
But not to me ! So, to your fortune ! (*Exit LONG.*)

MARC. (*With a shrug.*) Ay !

ACT II. SCENE I

This over-subtle sense of honesty
Is still the rock that splits your man of mind,
Dealing with men of action : he'll not spend
Five minutes' courtesy on an opposite,
But straight his honour's tarnished !—What now ? Pshaw !

(Retires up and seats himself at back, as enter MILO, noisily, seating himself at a table near front, where he is served with wine, surrounded by a small circle.)

2ND TRAD. What, Milo ! you begin early.

MILO. Late rather, considering the excellence of the occupation. A cup with you !

2ND TRAD. At this time of day ?

MILO. Why, your morning liquor has a peculiar virtue by contrast with previous lack.

3RD TRAD. A virtue still more apparent to him who drinks but once a day.

MILO. Drink once a day ! Wouldn't that be trying to make a summer out of one swallow ?—ahem !

1ST GIRL. Never a draught without its excuse.

MILO. Possibly ; but the excuse comes not by the draught. Good liquor is of a modest effect, causing a man to flush and stammer, and otherwise be wanting ; till wisdom comes to the rescue, and shows the virtue behind these drawbacks.

1ST GIRL. Wisdom come to brazen modesty ! are they not sisters, and always together ?

MILO. Doubtless ; my own person is a witness. But wisdom is the bodyguard, and orders modesty to the rear on the least show of danger.

2ND GIRL. So then, we are to believe you modest because you have the wisdom to conceal it ! You learned not that philosophy of Longinus.

ACT II. SCENE I

MILO. (*Carelessly.*) No, 'tis my own. But when I am as famous as Longinus, I will be as modest. I shall then be able to afford it. For, look you, the world is grown too courtly to disagree with one that thinks naught of himself; and if a man have an obstinate liking for the lower end of the table and the scraps of the feast, few will want the politeness to leave him them.

1ST TRAD. How know you that?

MILO. Why, as the cat knew the live lobsters unwholesome for her—by trying. I was once the perfect instance of what is humorously called the brightest ornament of youth. I blushed continually—especially at girls. I had an uncommonly poor time of it. Indeed, the habit of turning a vivid purple might have been fatal under a jealous emperor.

1ST GIRL. You're not nearly so bad now.

MILO. No, my dear. I grew gradually reconciled to my own impropriety; and as the heaviest afflictions become light if borne with patience, I came to tolerate even the girls. By a determined effort I attained, at once, cheek and happiness. My present spirits are quite good, and I am not now considered unduly shy. (*Catching and kissing her.*)

1ST GIRL. (*Breaking away.*) Not oppressively!

MILO. Depend upon it, the man who preaches modesty was never modest.—Myrrha, I vow!

(*Before this point MYRRHA has entered and made purchases, which she has collected in one place.*)

2ND GIRL. At her work, as you should be.

MILO. Each to his own vocation. Mine runs more in the way of a general criticism and superintendence.

(*Rising and waving the rest loftily away, salutes MYRRHA with ceremonious patronage.*) Morning, my dear! How may I serve you? Send me to the world's end. Com-

ACT II. SCENE I

mission me with one of Hercules' labours. Hast found that father of thine yet?

MYR. (*In a low voice—turning away.*) Not yet, not yet; he has not found me yet.

MILO. Well, what I say is, they'll be but sour fruit in the autumn, that take the spring of their days so cloudily. (*Seeing her in tears.*) Now, blister my blundering tongue! Little one! little one! 'twas only jest.

MYR. You mean kindly, Milo, but cannot feel my grief. Your home is everywhere and nowhere. We Hebrews part not so lightly with our country and our birthright.

MILO. Now, methinks there is much to be said for a comfortable servility; and surely a score of homes are better than one. For my part I find Athens, or Palmyra, much warmer than the parts beyond the Euxine, where, in the time of a vigorous emperor, the Goths are invited, I may say pressed, to remain. Now the Jews, your countrymen, who travel more than do the Goths, being obstinately prejudiced in favour of their own land, carry with them to every place a wilful blindness to its blessings. But perhaps you were in error to make choice of your present occupation. (*Seeing tears again threatening.*) Nay, nay—come, tell me, how fell it?

MYR. We dwelt at Jerusalem; but when the Persian began to trouble the East, my father moved to Alexandria, and thence to Rome, leaving me with friends in Egypt. His trade prospered, and he was ever about to send for me into Italy, when, four years ago, came Zabdas' invasion. All the world knows how easy a conquest he made of the shiftless Alexandrians. I was brought captive into Syria, and purchased by Clitus, whose daughter I serve. But how should you understand, who have no father, or none that you remember?

ACT II. SCENE I

MILO. Not remember my father? it would be most difficult to forget him! A large and powerful man, Myrrha; there was not always the friendliest feeling between us. Still I always treated him with respect; he insisted on it. My mother I don't seem to recollect; he was very muscular, and she must have died quite early. When I was eighteen, Cniva led the Goths⁽¹⁵⁾ southwards. My father, after enjoying himself thoroughly, perished very gloriously near Philippopolis; and I, notwithstanding much valour, was carried prisoner to Byzantium, and bought by Longinus for—well, I will not name that insulting total of obols and drachmas; thou could'st never believe it! And so I commenced philosopher at Athens. Longinus is a good man, but of few ideas—rather narrow; no balance, no lightness of touch. It asks great parts in a man to rise above his profession. But the life is much more polished.

MYR. (*Laughing.*) Idle rogue! will your philosophy condescend to carry these trifles for me to the steward, and say I'll come anon?

MILO. (*Staggered.*) A—charmed—of course. (*Proceeds slowly to pick up small articles.*)

MYR. (*Briskly.*) Ah, you'd better kneel, I think, and let me load you like an elephant.

MILO. Ye-es.

(*Kneels elaborately, while MYR. piles packages on him. He then rises with affected difficulty and staggers towards L.*)

MYR. A week's sleep at least for Hercules after that!

(*Turns away and resumes her marketing. MILO suddenly making a long arm, collars small boy jeering at him, and piles on him the heavier articles, reserving two of the minutest for himself.*)

MILO. A brave lad! So! (*Pointing off L.*) Forward. (*Exeunt MILO and BOY in procession, the former marking time on the latter's person.*)

ACT II. SCENE I

(*Re-enter SEL., with VAB., GLAB., FELIX and ATTENDANTS.*)

VAB. My lord Seleucus, tell me how to waste
The time 'twixt this and dinner. 'Tis too hot
For the lance, and I am perfect. Cards and dice
Cannot be played all day ; and I grow tired
Of torturing the idiot-slave you sent
To amuse me ; the dull brute has lost his sight,
And cannot see the coming thong or prick
That made him dance.

SEL. You should have kept his eyes :
Their terror is the essence of that sport.
But are you ready 'gainst the games? Your mules
Will have competitors, though skill like yours
Leaves rivalry behind.

VAB. Yes, I *can* drive.
They'll not lose, save by trick.

SEL. Who'll venture that
Trust me, the rascals know their place. Your sport
Must not be spoiled by clowns.

VAB. (*Perceiving MYR.—twitches SEL.'s arm.*) Look
do you note
Yon girl among the booths?

SEL. (*Critically.*) Ay, she may claim
A kind of beauty, which your taste commends
To more than native worth.

VAB. I like her well.

SEL. Why not convey her to your lodging then?
I'll prophesy her willing ; but, if not,
You have your men.

VAB. Yes ; but a scene in the square—
My straight-laced mother?

SEL. Well ! decoy the bird.
Then you can cage and muffle it, so that none

ACT II. SCENE I

Shall hear its voice outside the prison-bars.

VAB. True!—(*To FELIX*) Felix, go to yon girl, and feign some tale—

A messenger in waiting, or command
Of her own mistress—make her follow you,
And, once at home, detain her.—Now then, mark!

(*FELIX approaches and confers with MYR., who starts, glances towards VAB., and makes a gesture of vehement dissent.*)

She will not, cannot, eh? the pretty shrew!
I like them not too tame. We must try the other;
And trust to luck for quiet.—(*To Attendants*) Some of you,
Go help him carry the vixen to my lodging,
And see you let her scream not. Come, my lord.

(*Exeunt VAB., SEL., and train, except GLAB., FELIX and two others, who approach MYR., to arrest her. With a cry, she runs up to MARCELLUS, at back.*)

MYR. Save me, my lord! I am Dione's maid.

MARC. (*Coming down.*) Speak, child; what threatens you?—(*To GLAB.*) Whose men?

GLAB. Seleucus';

Bid to secure this whining chit, for whom
The Prince intends a favour she's scarce worth.

MARC. The Prince? incredible! Openly—in the square!
Sir, I can make some interest in Palmyra.
I will make good your failure to discharge
Your master's bidding, if't be his indeed.
You must not take her.

GLAB. (*Blustering.*) Yet we purpose to,
And that without your leave.

MARC. (*Drawing.*) 'Twill ask for more
Than swaggering, fellow. (*To bystanders.*) Friends, you'll
not stand by

ACT II. SCENE I

And see a poor girl haled off thus, whose fault
Is only innocence? Be men : make up !

*(Confronts GLAB. and his party. The crowd make way
for MYR., who runs off.)*

GLAB. Now, you rogue, come !

*(They set upon him together. MARC. defends himself, aided
by one or two Palmyrenes. At length he wounds FELIX in
the face, who leans for support on GLAB.)*

FEL. That cut shall cost you dear !

Your name ?

MARC. 'Twill outweigh thine in any land
Within the Roman pale. I am called Marcellus.

GLAB. *(Shouting.)* A Roman spy ! a Roman ! down
with Romans !

*(Makes at him again. Enter to his call several other
Palmyrenes, who set upon and disarm MARC. During the
struggle enter ZABDAS with guards.)*

ZAB. Hold ! on your lives ! what means this rioting
In the very eye and earshot of the Queen ?
Forbear, I say ! by Isis, are ye Goths,
That cannot dine or breakfast unless first
They pacify their murderous appetite
With slaughter of a man or two ? Forbear !
Whom have you prisoner ? Marcellus ? What !
Unhand him, sirs ; he is her highness' friend.
Now, if there be one cooler head among you,
Master alike of breath and choler, speak !
How fell this quarrel ?

GLAB. Sir, this bravo chose
To oppose himself to me in the performance
Of orders from the Prince, and stirring up
Some idle rascals to espouse his cause ;
Wounded my fellow here, and had the best,

ACT II. SCENE I

Till we were reinforced by timely help,
And he o'erpowered.

ZAB. I seem to know your face.
Are you not of Seleucus' following?

GLAB. I serve the Prince and him.

ZAB. (*Muttering.*) Who both are served
The worse, perchance!—(*Aloud*) Marcellus, tell your tale.

MARC. He speaks no more than truth, if something less.
They were bent to carry off a helpless girl
About her market-business,—one I knew.
She craved my help: I gave it: hence the brawl.

ZAB. (*Aside.*) And not the first bred of this cockerel's
whims!

(*Aloud.*) Justice apart, sir, were you well advised?
'Twas a bold course.

MARC. Yet one I will maintain:
And if Zenobia countenance such an act,
The Prince's or another's, I have known
Some Persian tyrant, not Palmyra's queen.

ZAB. The event will show us. Hold yourself prepared
With what excuse you can. All men depart!
Disperse them! (*To the Guards.—The square empties.*)

Enter L. DIONE attended.)

DI. I am bidden to enquire
The meaning of this uproar, risen almost
In the palace-precincts. Is Zenobia safe?
May she adventure yet into the streets?

ZAB. Ay, ay! a simple matter. Some fair slave
Was threatened with such countenance by the Prince
As she desired not; and Marcellus drew
To save her.

DI. (*Coldly.*) Doubtless 'twas a righteous act,
As are Marcellus' always. Yet the queen

ACT II. SCENE I

Will feel her son's affront. Your privilege, sir,
Must needs be somewhat stretched to make it good :
And Roman interference at this time
Is little popular.

MARC. (*With heat.*) Is there no right
But that of politics ? Must their sheltering cloak
Be spread to cover every rank offence,
And rape and bloody violence lift their heads
In impudent aggression, while we cry
This is a Roman, this a Palmyrene,
This man is royal, that man but a slave,
Or this a Christian, that idolatrous ;
Making our party-shouts and shibboleths
Guilty of sins that shriek in the face of heaven ?
—I am too vehement, but my sword was drawn
For justice, and for you.

DI. (*Contemptuous surprise.*) For me, my lord ?
I am ill-served by brawling. As I can,
I'll be your orator. (*To ZAB.*) The case will need
Your advocacy, Zabdas.

ZAB. You shall command me.

DI. (*Ignoring MARCELLUS.*) Come, then ; and, as we
go, render account
For all your recent rudeness. Two whole hours
I waited for you yesterday—

(*Exeunt L. ZAB. and DI. with train, laughing and talking.*)

MARC. (*Looking after them.*) So hard ?
No thought for the girl ? even though she knew her not,
Surely the touch of common womanhood
Might be my advocate. This insolence
That finds its warrant in such little fault,
Is it the mask of weakness and of fears,

ACT II. SCENE I

Or taint of some innate vulgarity,
Or the mere issue of an empty brain
In flattered beauty? Is it that women know
Their praise too potent an intoxicant,
And lest they make men drunk with happiness
Mix, ere they send that fire along the veins,
The qualifying ice, the bitter drop,
Leaving the doubt whether they praise or no?
Or is their treasury of smiles and scorn
Scattered in wantonness, with no more care
Than moves the untamed heart of the wind, that now
Lays mighty flail of tempest on the woods,
Darkening the air with leaf and bough, anon
Carpets the forest-floor with noiseless gold,
Loosed by a touch as tender as a babe's?
Why should a man regard this woman's heart,
This pathless garden of a thousand sweets,
Whose bloom enchants, whose briars entangle him,
Choking his manhood, killing kindliness,
And fostering in herself the cruel snake
That feeds on torture, to no richer end
Than a week's jest and brief comparison
With those whose smile was ruin to a world?
Happy, ay, happy! he that could neglect
This pitiless angel, this bright cruelty;
And follow steadfast on a fixed path,
Lonelier perchance, but still a home of peace,
Not soured, not burthened with his own contempt.
Yet no man can!

*(Enter R. AGRIPPA and others, Ambassadors from Rome.
On perceiving MARC., they salute him with deepest respect.)*

So soon! Is all prepared?

I looked not for this suddenness.

ACT II. SCENE I

AGRIP.

Sir, we left

The legions chafing at Byzantium
As frets an unbreathed horse against the curb.
All waits but on yourself.

MARC.

What news from Egypt?

For here I share Palmyra's ignorance.
Seleucus keeps his promise, and detains
All posts for the last month, though he dreams not
Of any expedition.

AGRIP.

Long ere this

Probus is landed with o'erwhelming force, ⁽¹⁴⁾
Able to master Egypt. Full report
Awaits my lord at Antioch.

MARC.

(Pondering.)

News will reach

Seleucus, too! but 'twill confirm him ours.
He must be used, not trusted. Let me see
Your missive. *(Taking roll from AGRIP., peruses and
returns it.)* So, 'tis well. Your errand done,
Meet me beyond the Emesan gate. Your way
Lies yonder. *(Exeunt AGRIP. and train after profoundly
saluting MARC.)*

Falls the fated bolt at last!

Must I play executioner to myself?
Forego my vision of a sweet unforced,
And tread the hope of uncommanded smiles
In the dust even with Palmyra? Pride like hers
Cannot but hate her country's conqueror.
All hangs upon Longinus; but when he feels
The suck and sweep of the current underneath
Setting in flood toward war, can he stand firm?
And war ends all! How would that spirit of hers
Have shone in Rome! What envious gods are you
Who bind our brows with triumph, and snatch away

ACT II. SCENE II

The very rose of the garland ; whose strong hands
Fashion us famous, fortunate, and withhold
What trebles all, the quick-breathed, murmuring clasp
And yielded sweets of the one woman we love !
Not all things to one man ! Fortune you grant :
Be it so—I follow fortune ! Let love go !

(*Exit R.*)

THE SCENE CLOSES.

SCENE II.—*Hall in ZENOBIA'S Palace, richly decorated and furnished ; the whole carefully shaded from the midday blaze, which is visible through one of the pillared openings overlooking the square. Light awnings swung overhead from pillar to pillar. ZENOBIA reclining with her ladies. Attendants fanning her.*

ZEN. When we are anxious, no event so small
But it assumes a pregnancy, and speaks
Of things beyond itself. Asterie,
When was't we heard from Rome ?

AST. Madam, 'tis months
Since tidings came from thence : I think 'twas when
Aurelian returned from Germany.

ZEN. And nothing since ! Yet in the interval
He must have acted much. From Egypt, too,
No news ! Methinks the world has fallen asleep !
Or is the slumber ours ? (*A pause—then impatiently*) Go,

Flavia,
See if Dione be returned. (*Exit FLAVIA.*) And you,
Antonia, fetch me Plato from the shelf,
And try to find Longinus ; we must calm (*exit ANTONIA*)
This restless fever with an Attic draught,
The sovereign prescription. Till they come,
One of you sing.

ACT II. SCENE II

SONG (*by one of the Queen's Ladies*)

Where is the flower
Gathered but yesternorn ?
Oh, sweet it was, all dew-besprent,
With colours richly blent !
Its fire and fragrance seemed a scorn
Of sorrow and lament !
Could it not last one hour ?

Where is the love
Vowed in the summer-tide ?
We forged no link of brittle clay ;
'Twas steel to bind away !
Ah, thou that canst not stint, yet hide
Thy tears, and cease to pray
Where prayers no pity move.

ZEN. (*Sadly.*) Ay, there's no treasury
Time will not rifle. What strong prayer shall bind
The shifting gale of passion, and make it breathe
In dulcet murmurs o'er one garden-ground ?
And Fame, the eternal vagrant, will he house
With us for ever ? Court him as we may,
Anon he shakes his restless plumes and leaves
A fading memory our sad comforter.

(*Re-enter FLAVIA with DIONE and ZABDAS.*)
Returns my general victor from these wars
Waged in Palmyra's streets ? Briefly, your news.

ZAB. Madam, I find no weightier cause than this :
The prince was fain to amuse his leisure hour,
Snatched from imperial cares (*coughs*), with a fair slave
Who shunned the (*coughs*) privilege, and found support
Among the market folk : Marcellus drew
Upon the prince's men, who raised a cry

ACT II. SCENE II

And brought a hornet's nest of Palmyrenes
About his ears. Being near, I rescued him
While yet alive, and cleared the market-place.

ZEN. Who was this girl? Dione, did you hear?

DI. Madam, I did not ask.

ZEN. (*Displeased.*) And yet methinks
She might have claimed your interest. One of you (*to Attendants*)

Find out her name.

FLAVIA. I heard it as I came :

Myrrha.

ZEN. (*To DI.*) Your own attendant?

DI. (*Confused.*) That is so :

But I guessed not—

ZEN. (*With quiet decision.*) She changes mistresses
To-day : she will be safer, now, with me,
Who set a rate on servants. One of mine
Shall compensate you. Bid Marcellus wait (*to an Attendant*)

One hour from now. (*Aside*) This Roman must be schooled
Vabalàthus carries our authority
Even where he most degrades it.

(*Re-enter ANTONIA with LONGINUS.*)

Aptly come

To soothe a ruffled spirit. Give us leave.

(*Exeunt all but ZEN. and LONG.*)

LONG. I hope your highness' trouble is not such
As Plato cannot lighten ?

ZEN. (*Pacing the hall restlessly.*) Why, my friend,
I am vexed beyond my wont. The prince's youth
Cannot excuse his license. I did wrong
In granting him his dignities, a step
Whose revocation now would seem to dread

ACT II. SCENE II

And ease of but a year since. Is aught wrong
That I may remedy? thou'rt happy here?

LONG. (*Embarrassed.*) The favour of Zenobia is a
prize
For which a God might leave his throne in bliss
And reckon him no loser.

ZEN. Compliment!

LONG. It is an art I practise not.

ZEN. Then must
Thy wisdom be at fault to spend such praise
On one who knows her faultiness, and debt
To help like thine. It was my fancy then?

LONG. No more than fancy, madam.

ZEN. Be it so!
And yet I feel you changed.—But let it pass.
We count on you for supper. Zabdas comes,
Otho, Seleucus, others: but all's dull
Without Longinus. You will fail us not?

LONG. My hours, my life itself, are dedicate
To your sole service.

ZEN. Good! till then farewell.

(ZEN. gives him her hand to kiss, and goes out slowly L.
with a musing smile. LONG. remains silent, gazing fixedly
after her for some seconds, then impatiently)—

LONG. Why does she haunt me thus? Am I a boy
To take the moon for mistress? Twenty years
Of this grave habit and a grizzled beard
Should amply warrant me. What is this spell
That sets my words in stammering disarray,
And leaves me dreaming like a lovesick lad,
Picturing gait and glance, the imperial wave
Of her hand, that perfect poise of her proud head
Turned in surprise or anger, that rare smile

ACT II. SCENE II

Whose witchery might make the Paphian queen
 Forswear the art of charming? Is this love?
 And was that dreadful armoury of pain,
 Of scorching self-reproach and passionate tears,
 And quivering hope and aching dull despairs,
 Reserved till now? Thou great o'erseeing Power,
 Wreak, if I have deserved it, all thy wrath,
 And yet not thus! scourge me with hatred, lust,
 Make me a traitor stain with cruelty;
 But spare my soul the searing of this iron,
 Punish me not with love! (*A long pause.*)

Why am I here?

Long since the seas are safe, the Goths repressed:
 And Athens from cool halls and studious groves
 Calls fruitlessly to one who, lingering on
 To pleasure a fair woman, feels himself
 Sucked by the vortex of her great affairs
 Out of his walk, divorced from peace, the mark
 Of petty spites! for Zabdas grows alert,
 And, lest my voice be heard, redoubles his
 For war, for madness!—Is it then so mad?
 So hopeless? Grant her but victorious,
 She were the pearl of sovereigns, fitter far
 Than this rough savage, this Aurelian,
 To shape wide channels for the world's great stream.
 And less will not content her.—Dreaming fool!
 Aurelian is the mightier. Back to Greece
 And quiet days! the door stands open yet.
 Back! ere the fateful meshes of this coil
 Involve thee wholly, or thy sanity
 Yield to o'ermastering impulse.

*(Through the window from across the square float the
 voices of the Priests of the Sun, singing the Noontide Hymn.
 He approaches the window and listens.)*

ACT II. SCENE II

NOONTIDE HYMN.

Fervent Lord ! whose onward march
Knows no pause in heaven's great arch,
Let our manhood's effort vie
With thy tireless energy :
Toiling spade or artist strain,
Fevered market, statesman's brain,
Soldier's, sailor's, flag unfurled,
Poet-vein that warms the world.

Tend the sowing, shield the spring,
Mellow to the harvesting ;
Purify from sordid stain ;
Sift and purge it, chaff from grain.
While we ply the labour planned,
Droops our heart and fails our hand :
Strengthen us, unwearying One !
Light us till our task be done.

LONG. (*Still at the window.*) Well do ye pray, for is
not light the need

Of all who walk this darkened world ? O Thou,
By whatsoever name Thou would'st be called,
Power inscrutable, inviolate,
Whom knowing not, man worships, in this heart
Put strength, put patience : grant me too Thy light !

(*Re-enter ZENOBIA hurriedly.*)

ZEN. My need is instant ! I have mighty news !
Aurelian's envoys bring me curt demand
For fine and tribute. Further he insists
That Vabalàthus forthwith be deprived
Of his new rank, unauthorised by himself,
Sole fountain of imperial dignities !
Thus in his modest missive, whose requests

ACT II. SCENE II

Refused, the penalty's immediate war !

What shall I do ?

LONG. (*With face averted.*) Your highness knows my thought.

ZEN. I know in you discretion ; I know not,
Or have not known you, pusillanimous !

LONG. (*As before.*) I'll bear the name of coward, to avert
What I foresee.

ZEN. (*Vehemently.*) What can your eyes foresee
Worse than the sequel of these claims ? Suppose
This heavy sum wrung from my Palmyrenes,
The Cæsar whom my royal hands endured
Degraded, ignominiously unfrocked,
Like a whipped schoolboy—will his jealousy
Be satisfied ? not till this crown I wear
Be trampled in the dust beneath his feet,
And heavy chastisement efface the stain
From the imperial scutcheon. Be assured,
This is not all.

LONG. Defiance will but fan
The emperor's fury.

ZEN. Let it flare itself
To ashes, if we win.

LONG. (*Facing her.*) But can you win ?

ZEN. War, my lord, is a hazard : yet 'tis one
Where skill and courage many a time outweigh
Malignant fortune.

LONG. He is stronger, far !
And recent struggles have inured his arms.
Yours rust this many a day.

ZEN. Inflexible !
What would you have of me ?

LONG. (*In a hard, constrained voice.*) You must submit :

Z.

65

E

ACT II. SCENE II

Pay what he asks ; degrade the prince—you own
He has disgraced his office ; and beseech
The emperor's pardon.

ZEN. (*Bitterly.*) Can Longinus feel
An insult ? does he wince beneath the lash
Of self-contempt ? or is that temper framed
Of metal so insensible that no blow
Can mar the wrought mould's smiling fixity,
No heat can drive it to one stubborn bulk,
Feature and form forgotten ?

LONG. (*Passionately.*) Is this just ?
I would endure a year of cruel pains,
Silent, to save your spirit a moment's pang.
True, I have borne with insolence till I seem
The stock put up in likeness of a man
To scare the ploughland's fluttering pilferers,
That soon insult their idle terror's cause.
'Twas borne for thee ; and must thou join the taunt ?

ZEN. Then thou dost feel !—(*After a pause, in a low
submissive voice.*) It shall be as thou wilt.

(*She seats herself at a table ; writes, signs, and seals ;*

LONG. *watching her closely. Through the windows there
rises the murmur of a mighty crowd gathering without.*)

ZEN. (*Rising.*) Thus do I seal my fate ! Read it, my lord ;
Acknowledge that I have not spared myself.
No idle document ! it casts away
The gathered harvest of some gallant years
Wherein a whilom queen Zenobia
Reared 'mid the sands a monarchy that shook
The rock-built base of the world, making men's brains
The home of trumpet-music, and their deeds
A tempest-flame whose breath was felt in heaven !
And here her story ends ! Men may have done

ACT II. SCENE II

As much for women, once : but never yet
 Did woman offer such a sacrifice
 Unto—I do forget myself ! My lord,
 Go, carry this to the ambassadors :
 It is your work ; may Heaven prosper it,
 And give me patience, patience !

(Bursts into tears and turns away, leaning against a pillar near the window. LONG., after reading the paper, remains rooted in one place, gazing from it to her. At last, with a strong effort, he makes some steps to leave the chamber. In the stillness the murmurs of the crowd below swell to a shout—"Zenobia !" "Palmyra !" "Down with the Romans." The paper falls from his hands : he stands irresolute.)

ZEN. *(Sadly to herself.)* Leaderless ones ! Why do ye
 call on me ?

I am no queen ! I have betrayed your trust,
 Heaped you with shame, and given away your boast
 Of an unyoked equality with that
 Was proudest in this world.

LONG. Madam !

ZEN. *(Turning.)* Still here !

Must thou needs stay to gloat o'er my despair ?
 I thought thee gone. Prithee, now, get thee gone ;
 And do my bidding while it is to do.
 Leave me and shame together.

(Turns away again. The noise from the square grows louder. LONG., after standing a moment in doubt, seats himself at the table, and writes rapidly with animated countenance. Then rising, he approaches ZEN., holding both documents.)

LONG. Will the queen

Vouchsafe a moment's audience ?

ZEN.

The queen !

O pitiful imposture ! *(Turning.)* What is here ?

ACT II. SCENE II

LONG. Letters to Rome, awaiting signature.

ZEN. (*Taking and reading.*) Is this some jest? are these your words, my lord?

LONG. (*Handing pen*) Only until your hand shall make those signs

That send them down to all eternity,

Lifting them into peerless rank, as yours.

ZEN. (*Incredulous.*) How will you justify this change?

LONG. As born

Of clearer vision. Sometimes o'er the waste

Of furious waters, where the mariner

Hath beat for days in doubt, God's sudden gleam

Strikes and shows land. 'Tis such a ray as this

Illumes me now. Your people idolize you :

This crushing fine is laid in penalty

For loyalty to you : they must not bear it.

Up with your standard ! strike for victory.

If the gods grant, earth shall be happier

By such a queen as her o'erwearied eyes

Have given up hoping for ! Myself am yours

Even to the uttermost consequence that hangs

Upon this paper.

ZEN. (*In an ecstasy.*) Spare me, immortal powers !

Till acts may thank you fitly ! (*Pointing to first paper.*)

Give me that :

First let me crush and trample underfoot

This shame which I thought duty ! Now, my lord,

Being a queen again, with your consent

We may attend to business of state.

(*Takes second paper, seats herself, and signs it. Then more quietly, her hand on his.*)

You give me life ! all recompense is short ;

Yet I shall find a method. This great act

ACT II. SCENE II

Must claim us wholly now. I look to none
Sooner than to yourself.

*(The cries still rise from below. Enter ZAB., SEL.,
and other SENATORS and COURTIER.)*

My loyal friends,
Urge me no further : my long doubt is laid ;
And here my answer drawn. *(To LONG.)* Read it, my lord ;
Your words are worthiest to speak for me.

*(She leads LONG. to the window. The applause which greets
them is silenced by a gesture from LONG., who reads.)*⁽¹⁵⁾

LONG. "Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra and the East, to
Aurelian, Emperor of Rome.—Whereas the Emperor sends
us word of fine and tribute, and of other matters, we,
having with our Council read his letter, can find no
reasonable interpretation thereof. In the regulation of
our kingdom, we had not, nor have we, any purpose
to consult him : but, since his meaning is obscure to us,
we judge it best to meet him in person. We follow
on the heels of his ambassadors attended by our armies,
the spectacle of whose valour and discipline must needs
impress a warrior such as we understand the Emperor
to be. Until which meeting we commend him to his own
designs."

ZEN. Such is our answer, citizens ! Is it yours ?
I ask your voice ; for peace, or war ?

*(From every quarter of the hall, as from the farthest limits
of the square, comes, amid the waving of caps and the flash of
drawn swords, the answer, given in one deafening shout.)*

OMNES.

For war !

(Prolonged enthusiasm, on which the CURTAIN falls.)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III. SCENE I

(Six months have passed.)

*Private Cabinet in ZENOBIA'S apartments. Evening. Doors
L. and R. Enter R. SELEUCUS and FELIX.*

SEL. Quick, sir, quick ! There is much to do ere midnight. How did you pass the lines ?

FEL. Crept through last night before the moon was up, and hid in the angle beneath the bastion, till I could make sure who was on guard. By midday I heard Glabrio's voice : I hailed him, and he let down the ladder.

SEL. Who saw you ? none but Glabrio's troop ?

FEL. None, my lord.

SEL. So ; that is well enough. Now for matters at Alexandria. Two days since, when Probus came, I saw our plans had failed. How went it ?

FEL. My lord, the luck was against us. All was ready : the city largely with us, and ready to rise on signal—half Probus' guards bribed, who would have governed the rest—nothing wanting but the single point of his death, and that I could not compass without his secretary, one Coelius—a Jew, I think. For fear or scruple he refused the offer and warned Probus, who indeed paid little heed enough, but the scheme was blown upon. I took hiding at once. When he marched from Egypt I accompanied as a camp-follower, crept past the pickets as I said, and so here.

SEL. (*Pondering.*) Coelius—new to me ; curse the rascal ! he has lost me Egypt ! Was my name mentioned ?

ACT III. SCENE I

FEL. To him, my lord. No other guarantee would have served. But I know not whether he named you to Probus. Anyway the affair passed quite unnoticed, and the footing between Probus' people and our own remained as before. He can have made little account of Coelius' tale.

SEL. Came Coelius hither with him?

FEL. From Egypt, ay; but since we reached Palmyra, he is gone, none knows whither.

SEL. A Jew—he has some scheme of his own. No matter: if he appear later, he can prove nothing without you, and you must lie low till the thing be forgotten. The case is not so bad. Our front is changed, of course. I have written to Aurelian. Half of the western face, more than a mile of wall, is under my command. To-night, during the moonless hours 'twixt nine and twelve, a space about the big bastion and Odenathus' tower will be left unguarded, and before midnight we may expect visitors. Within half an hour he can lodge a hundred men upon the wall, seize the nearest gate and throw it wide to the advance in force, and before daybreak all is in his hands! He will owe the city to me, and spite of four months' waiting will pay for it handsomely. How are his troops?

FEL. Worse off than we: worn out with siege-works and nigh starving, for there's barely a melon or a beggarly date left in the region. Had Probus and his stores come two days later, he would have met them on the homeward march for Rome.

SEL. The gods be praised he did not; 'twould have left us helpless. If not our triumph, it must be Aurelian's. I have made excuse for the delay—Zabdas' vigilance, Longinus' suspicion, and so forth. His anger will be spent on them and on the Queen; 'tis like to go hard with her! but we have nothing to fear while you keep hid.

ACT III. SCENE I

(*Enter GUARDS R.*)

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD. (*To SEL.*) My lord, I have orders to clear all rooms in this gallery before seven to-night.

SEL. Whose orders?

CAPTAIN. Zabdas'.

SEL. We will obey, sir. (*To FEL.*) Come!

(*Exeunt R. In a few seconds the GUARDS' challenge is heard without.*)

GUARD. (*Without.*) Halt there! The pass-word, lady?

DIONE. (*Without.*) Antioch.

(*Enters R. with GUARD.*)

You may admit me, soldier. 'Tis my turn
As lady of the chamber. Has the Queen
Come forth again?

GUARD. Not yet, 'tis barely seven.

(*SOLDIERS retire to entrance R.*)

DI. I am in time to hear their conference—
These three that sway Palmyra's destinies!
I must be satisfied. There has been talk
Of Zabdas sallying with Zenobia
And rousing Persian succours—desperate chance!
Long before that Palmyra falls; and then?
The crownless exile lays aside her dreams,
And grants her loyal Zabdas' love the prize
Its hunger dares not ask: and there an end!
And I shall never see him; never hear
The voice that's all my music: nevermore
Be praised or chidden! Death were better! Hush!
(*Conceals herself behind a curtain on the noise of approaching footsteps.*)

GUARD. (*Without.*) Halt there, my lord! The pass-word?

ACT III. SCENE I

LONGINUS. (*Without.*) Antioch.

(LONG. *enters with* MILO *and* GUARD R.)

I have Zenobia's privilege. Milo here

Retires immediately. Leave us alone. (*Exit* GUARD.)

(*To* MILO.) Quick ! to thy tale ! how long ago was this ?

MILO. 'Tis but two nights since that I was coming from a friend in the Jews' quarter, where I had been to eat a crust and taste a quarter-cup of wine, for these are hard times, sir, as may easily be seen, for a man's belly ; and mine has lacked of its desired fulness this many a day.

LONG. Thy stomach matters not : on with thy tale.

MILO. My lord, I did but change a word or two, and forth again ; for, now-a-days, if one do but pass the time of day, they clap him in ward for a meddling rogue, or off to the ramparts with him to pile stones or hand up pitch, or other such unbecoming service.

LONG. (*Sternly.*) Thy tale ! Thy tale !

MILO. Sir, as I came out into the street of Palms, before I turned the corner of the Portico, methought I caught your name. I shrunk behind a pillar, and listened. It was Seleucus in talk with Glabrio. He said that within a week he should be sovereign of Palmyra, and Glabrio captain of the garrison ; and further, that Zabdas, and the queen's highness, and Prince Vabalàthus, and your lordship's self, would be but a little morsel to the Romans' angry stomach, which, my lord, I could well believe, for 'tis long since there has been any plenty, either with them or us. Then they moved forth into the moonlight, and I saw their faces plainly. I followed awhile, keeping in the shadow of the portico, but could catch no word more.

LONG. And this was two nights since ! Man ! couldst not speak ?

MILO. My lord, I had no means to come at you. For

ACT III. SCENE I

everywhere 'tis "Halt there!" "Back there!" "Password!" when mayhap a poor man is not aware of any password; or else "Longinus hath more to do than to attend thee, thou rogue, Milo!" which indeed, my lord, seemeth commonly to be the case. I would we were again in Athens, where folk have less press of business, and more to eat!

LONG. (*After a moment's thought*) Dost know where Lord Seleucus is on guard?

MILO. I think 'tis by the Emesan gate.

LONG. To-night
At nine—thou knowest the stairway that leads up
To Odenathus' tower?—await me there.

MILO. I hope, my lord, you mean not to run any foolish risk upon the wall. 'Tis very dangerous, I hear, especially at night, when a man cannot well see what devilish thing be flying about, and goodly proportions make him only the fairer target.

LONG. See thou be there! and breathe no syllable!
Silence! away! (*Exit MILO R.*)

At last it clears! at last!

Treachery, as I guessed! how else could fall
Such dire succession of untowardness?
Egypt surprised, the convoys all cut off,
The Arab succours—accident, forsooth?
Ay, if Seleucus be an accident!
They were forewarned of all; and now, perchance,
Wait but the signal of an unbarred gate,
Or an unguarded bastion! How unmask
This traitor? He has won Zenobia's trust,
And bandaged Zabdas' eyes. Who will believe
The word of this mere slave? I must have proofs
Clear as the day. They may be mine to-night.

ACT III. SCENE I

What if it be to-night? Two days are passed
Already! Oh, for some persuasive drench
To philtre Zabdas' jealousy! Grant his help,
Within six hours the city were secure.
He comes: I must attempt him.

(Enter ZABDAS, escorted by the GUARD R.)

ZAB. *(To the GUARD.)* Draw your men
Back to the outer chamber. See you let
None pass till I come forth again. *(Exit GUARD.)* My
lord!

(Bows stiffly as he perceives LONG.)

LONG. Zabdas, this is no time for compliment.
I have some urgent news, which 'tis unfit
The queen be troubled with. Briefly, 'tis this:
There's treachery afoot: suspicion points
Its finger at Seleucus.

ZAB. *(Scornfully)* News indeed!
Your proofs?

LONG. Manifest proof is wanting yet.
Grant me your help meanwhile. Either remove
Seleucus from his present guard, or post
Men of your own to watch him.

ZAB. *(With indifference)* Sir, the guards
Are posted well enough: they cannot shift
For every idle rumour. You were best
Be heedless of these chatterers, prone to wreak
A siege's sufferings and alarms on those
Who do command them.

LONG. *(Vehemently)* This security
Is ruinous! suspicion wakes too late
Upon a plot in action: it should strike
Before the fell design's articulate,
Choking it in the cradle.

ACT III. SCENE I

ZAB. Tut ! forget
Your lecture-desk, if it be possible.
A schoolmaster to mend my soldiering !
Content you with a queen's discipleship :
I lack the meekness for it.

LONG. (*With suppressed indignation.*) Is this well ?

ZAB. Or well or ill, 'tis so !—Bring me your proofs !
If they bear substance and a likelihood
Unborn of meddlesomeness and nervous fears,
They shall be worth attention. Not till then
Will I insult her kinsman at a time
When she most needs all friends.

LONG. (*Striding to him*) You shall have proof !
But if that proof lie in the city's fall,
By heaven, my lord, for this blind arrogance
You answer to myself !—No more ! the queen !

(*Enter ZENOBI A L.*)

ZEN. Both here ! and no soul else ?

(*The three seat themselves at a table.*)

Now, my good lords,
What remedy have you for these desperate woes
That thicken round Palmyra, day by day
Pressing us closer ?

ZAB. By your highness' leave
There are three courses open. First, to yield :
Exchanging wounds and terrors for disgrace,
Harder to bear. Next, to hold out : this fails
When our provisions do ; so but defers
Surrender, better offered now. The third
Shows greater promise : 'tis to sally forth,
And cut our passage through the Roman camp
Out to the desert—reinforce ourselves
With the dispersed, unleadered, Arab hordes,

ACT III. SCENE I

And succours from the Persian, and so fall
With better prospect on Aurelian,
And drive him beaten homewards.

ZEN. Like thyself
Is thy advice, brave Zabdas ! unto whom
Action is all, and patience difficult.
What says Longinus ?

LONG. In your highness' self
Resides the virtue of your Palmyrenes.
Remove that influence, they will think no scorn
To yield the city.

ZEN. Surely thou dost wrong
Unto their loyalty ! I dare avouch
There's none so poor in spirit.

LONG. Amen to that !
Yet 'tis a danger. Could your dash be made
Privily, with but few, it were unknown,
At least for a while.

ZAB. Madness ! the posts lie thick
On every side. No smallest company
Could hope to elude their vigilance ! 'twould but end
In the queen's capture, and precipitate
Palmyra's threatened fall. Only in force
Could the attempt succeed.

LONG. And made in force,
May fail.

ZEN. Enough, my lords ! I will not go.
Shall I desert my people ? 'tis too like
Cowardice in myself, to shun the effect
Which my own acts invited.

LONG. Nay, not so !
Could we but find some secret sure device
To steal you forth, it were a golden chance

ACT III. SCENE I

Of safety for Palmyra and yourself :

But such our wisdom finds not.

ZACCHÆUS. (*Emerging from a secret door in the wall, c., disclosing a dark descending passage.*) It lies here !

(ZAB. and LONG. start from their seats, drawing sword.)

Be reassured, my lords ! I am a friend.

ZAB. (*Threatening him.*) Friend, fellow ! We will be assured of that !

ZAC. You see I have no weapon.

LONG. Dost thou know

Whose is this presence ?

ZAC. (*Saluting ZEN. respectfully.*) Ay ! and reverence it.

ZAB. Then tell us first, how thou art here ; and next, The why of this intrusion.

ZAC. That, told first,

Will lay your fears more quickly.

ZAB. (*Sheathing.*) To it, then !

ZAC. My errand here is yours—the queen's escape : And by the self-same means that brought me hither. (*Turning to ZEN.*) You have heard, lady, of a secret way⁽¹⁶⁾ Made in the time of bygone emperors —Trajan's or Hadrian's—leading from this place Out to the desert ?

ZEN. Rumours I have heard ; But thought the knowledge of it lost long since In the tumultuous ravage of those years When Parthia first, and Persia after her, Troubled these Eastern kingdoms.

ZAC. 'Twas not lost Wholly, though known to few, of whom perchance I am the sole survivor. God be praised I am so ! Gracious queen, this covered way Existed ages before Hadrian,

ACT III. SCENE I

Who only re-discovered it. 'Tis said
That in the golden days of Israel,
When Solomon built Tadmor 'mid the palms
Which name it now, this secret pathway served
His royal ends—of safety, government,
Or dalliance with some fair Syrian girl ;
Forgotten now—but the tradition passed
From sire to son unbroken. Years ago,
When the late Odenathus ruled, my trade
Bringing me to Palmyra, I had mind
Of this lost secret : I began to search
Along the desert edge, and found at length
The stone-work of the entrance, choked with sand
And overgrown with brushwood—but within,
The passage, all as perfect as 'twas left
By Hadrian.

ZEN. Is this possible ?

ZAC. By this route .

Am I come hither. See it for yourselves.

(All rise and examine the descending stair : DIONE moving forward to look and retiring again unobserved.)

ZAB. *(As they re-enter the cabinet.)* If this strange tale
be truth, we have our wish.

LONG. *(Aside to ZAB.)* Caution, my lord ! we know
too little yet.

What if this be a trap, and at the mouth
There wait a company of Roman horse
To seize her on her issuing ? *(To ZAC.)* What pledge
Hast thou to offer us ? How may we know
This is no plot, hatched in Aurelian's tent ?

ZAC. Had he my knowledge, should he not be here ?
Your town had fallen ere this.—Here is my pledge !

ACT III. SCENE I

(With a fierce gesture he bares his left arm, and shows it contorted and deeply branded.)

I am a Jew : a year ago I plied
My trade in Rome upon the Aventine,
Injuring none, enduring patiently
The scorn my nation suffers, while God hides
His countenance from us. There arose a talk
Of edicts from the Emperor to reform
The abuses of the city : discontent,
Already smouldering, flamed into revolt,
Fanned by the wealthier senators, who feared
Curtailement of their rights : but, in a week,
Aurelian and the legions were in Rome ;
And, as beneath the falcon's threatened swoop
The woods grow silent, every murmur died.
The Jews were made the scape-goat. On this arm
I carry the memorial of wrongs
That cry for vengeance.

ZEN. So thou offerest
Help to his enemy?

ZAC. Escape at least ;
 Begging thus his passionate desire
 To have you captive. Further, 'tis to you
 Our rabbis point, as chosen instrument
 Of Israel's restoration, so our God
 Will turn Him and be gracious.

ZEN. (*Thoughtfully.*) That may chance,
Howe'er past present hope. In the meantime
I owe this act its recompense. Repair
Thy fortunes from our chest : take what thou wilt.

(Opening the door of a side chamber.)

ZAC. No, not in this ! who shall accept a hire
For his own vengeance ? that repays itself !

ACT III. SCENE I

Besides, I am not poor.

ZEN. What is thy name?

ZAC. Zacchæus, lady! one not powerless
Among these deserts, though they know me not
These many years.

ZAB. How came you hither, now,
Since with Aurelian's arms you durst not?

ZAC. True!

I came with Probus' levies, new arrived
From Egypt. I have been his secretary,
Unknown, until last night: when I set forth
On this design.

LONG. And was our strait foreseen
By thee in Rome?

ZAC. (*With a shrug.*) Surely 'twas possible!
But I'd a double purpose. Eight years since
I left the sunshine of a darkened life
In Egypt; I have sought her there in vain!

ZEN. What was her name?

ZAC. Zillah: and 'tis most like
She was brought captive into Syria
By Zabdas four years past.

ZEN. 'Twill be my care,
These troubles past, to find her.—Now, my lords,
How do you counsel me?

ZAB. Accept this chance!
Ride for the Persian frontier. Sapor knows
His kingdom totters if Palmyra fall:
Gather his powers, rally to your flag
The desert-horse, and here again! while yet
The city, safe in our joint leadership,
Defies the Roman leaguer.

ZEN. Ride! but how?

Z.

81

F

ACT III. SCENE I

The desert is no stable to supply
Steeds to my need.

ZAC. Your highness may command
The fleetest camels of the Syrian waste
Through me. They shall await you at the mouth
Of this same passage, at what hour you please.

ZEN. Why then, my lords, we shall see Persia soon !
And to ensure all secrecy I'll take
But one attendant, Myrrha, with some six
Or seven for escort ; and, for aught I see,
We may be gone to-morrow.

LONG. (*With sudden energy.*) No, to-night !
Lose not a day ! The leaguer, reinforced,
Will be more closely pressed, and our supplies
Allow no waiting. Zabdas' soldiership,
Wasted within these walls, must second you,
And work our rescue. (ZAB. *starts.*) Leave me ample
powers,
And trust the town to its high battlements
For some three weeks.

ZAB. (*Slowly, after regarding LONG. fixedly.*) Longinus
counsels well.
Is such your highness' pleasure ?

ZEN. Surely so !
We cannot lack our general ! we must leave
Longinus governor. 'Tis evening now :
(*To ZAC.*) Canst thou fulfil thy promise in three hours ?

ZAC. I shall be waiting at the passage-mouth
Before eleven, with camel, horse, and guide
To steer your desert-gallop. Linger not !
The legionaries ransack every nook
For forage ; should they happen on the place,
Our chance is gone. The moon is up by twelve :

ACT III. SCENE I

Let it find you far in the desert. Once across
Euphrates, you are safe.—I must be gone
At once. Delay not, madam : the time is short.

ZEN. We take thy word, Zacchæus, and thy help.
We will prepare us straight. (*With gesture of farewell.*)
Until eleven !

(*Exeunt ZENOBIA by door L., ZAC. by passage.*)

ZAB. The gods be thanked ! but there are other dues
That call for payment. (*To LONG.*) I have done you
wrong.

This act has something in it more generous
Than my dull prejudice looked for. But I'll have
No vantage of it : and for my hasty word
An hour ago, 'twas blindness, jealousy,
What fault you will, so it may find forgiveness.

(*Offers his hand.*)

LONG. (*Grasping it.*) Freely as e'er I gave it ! Now,
my fear,
Which is no fancy's coinage, may be made
Safe ere the morning. Only give command
Seleucus' post be changed, and in six hours
We are safe.

ZAB. That shall be done : and a picked guard
Assigned yourself.

LONG. Spend not a thought for me :
Look to your charge ! think in your hands is laid
The single flawless jewel of this world !
Lose it, or let it fall, thou must not dream
Of men's forgiveness ever ! bring it back,
Restore it to this towered coronet,
Thou shalt be well-nigh god !

ZAB. Fear not for that !
Be you as careful of the diadem,

ACT III. SCENE I

And we'll reset our jewel in its place
To shine with added lustre.

(Exit ZAB. R.)

LONG. *(Seated—dejectedly.)* Thy best haste
May prove a loiterer ! Yet now, descend
What unseen blow there will, it harms not her !
'Tis I, whose folly drank such dream of bliss
As is not tasted in the exultant cup
That passes 'mongst Immortals, shall atone ;
And those indignant seats be pacified !
I think we shall not meet after to-night !
Never again, after to-night !

(His head falls in his hands. Re-enter ZEN. L.: she watches him a moment in silence.)

ZEN.

My lord !

Do you in conscience counsel this, and not
In single care for me ?

LONG. *(Rising.)* Palmyra and thee.

ZEN. Nay, say Palmyra only ! never thrust
A shameful safety on me. Is this flight
What policy prescribes ?

LONG.

'Tis policy !

Even should the city fall ere you return,
It falls if you remain. Unless you go,
There is no gleam of hope.

ZEN. *(After a long pause, slowly and deliberately.)* I
shall not go !

(She seats herself with an air of immobility. LONG. stands looking at her. Then, taking off his chain of office, he presents it to her kneeling.)

LONG. Madam, resume these ornaments ! I go forth
To make submission to Aurelian,
As one Zenobia has disgraced.

ACT III. SCENE I

ZEN. (*Passionately.*) This shows
Thou hast the tyrant native in thee,—bred
In the bone ! and in my weak hour it leaps forth
As on a prey ! Yet I'll not go !

LONG. (*Rising in assumed anger.*) Stay then !
And leave this black stain on your memory,
That, when a people cried to her for help,
Zenobia quailed ! So run mankind's report
Even till their voice is hushed, and the great scroll
Of worldly matters all be written out,
And tossed to endless silence !

(*A pause, during which the queen remains still immovable:
then changing his tone to one of passionate entreaty*)

Have I spent
Naught in your service ? Have I sacrificed
Nothing of will or pride that yours might stand
Erect, unhumbled ? Did I not forswear,
Solely to pleasure you, my quiet haunts,
And stoop me to the invidious anxious yoke
That bows the neck of Power—unspoken fears,
Hands that must work in darkness, doubtful feet
Groping for hold along the slippery edge
That mounts, 'mid cloudy chasm and precipice,
To sunlit spaces of a people's good ?
Oh ! I take bitter shame to urge you thus ;
But, if you can acknowledge any debt,
Then ride this night to Persia ! (*In a low voice, kneeling
and taking her hand*) 'Tis my prayer !

ZEN. (*Aside.*) And, as thou knowest too well, that
prayer commands.

(*Rising, in a low tone, her head averted*)
We have your escort, sir, to the passage mouth ?

ACT III. SCENE I

LONG. (*Rising from his knee, in his wonted respectful tone*)
Some way, madam, at least. I shall await you
Here before ten.

(*Exeunt ZEN. and LONG. severally.*)

DI. (*Emerging from her hiding-place.*) She loves
Longinus then !

Zabdas will lose his prayers. Yet, once away,
Are mine not lost ? What is this cloudy hint
About Seleucus ? Who can prophesy
Palmyra be not fallen within a week,
And we afoot for Rome ? then what return
For me from Rome, or him from Persia ? None !
But even from this parting I must pass
Adown the sunless valley of lonely years
Unto that frozen waste, where gibber and flit
Tired ghosts that once walked in flushed womanhood
With love on morning heights ! Sooner come death
What means to hinder it ? Seleucus ? he—
Nay, there's a surer method ; but a line
Scribbled, a soldier bribed, and before dawn
They are Aurelian's ! I'll entreat for them :
He dare not kill her ; 'twere to blot his fame
Indelibly : and Zabdas will be spared
To win him conquests—ay, and to despise
A traitress ! Shall I not despise myself ?
Oh, idle questioning ! while I debate
Swift ebbs the tide of opportunity,
And sweeps my life to that unsounded sea
Where prayers and tears avail not. Write it straight !
Then manage its despatch : they will be gone
Ere midnight—gone ! Gods ! let me be in time

(*Exit hurriedly.*)

THE SCENE CLOSES.

ACT III. SCENE II

SCENE II.—*The Walls of Palmyra. Night. In the foreground a large military engine with stones piled near it. Beyond the ramparts are seen the innumerable lights of AURELIAN'S camp. Enter MILO L., groping his way in the darkness.*

MILO. 'Tis a pitiful thing to see how one furnished with all the outward appurtenance of wisdom—to wit, a lean body, a furred gown, and a trick of inattention—should yet be totally lacking in the same. If I were Longinus, would I keep a man afoot in this most dangerous spot for near two hours? He considers not how society is robbed! In the dark, too! I think there be not a buttress nor catapult nor other cursed contrivance whatsoever within half a mile of this that I have not broken my shins against since nine o'clock. Whoop—p! (*Stumbles over the engine, and falls on his face, then picking himself up and rubbing his shins ruefully.*) 'Tis nothing—nothing at all, if only you're used to it. By the knuckle-bones of my father, which I very well remember—or by these same over-high and otherwise ill-arranged walls of Palmyra, at whose building I am glad I was not present—if he come not straight, I'll home to bed! 'Tis clean contrary to all sound rule of warfare thus to expose and endanger the wise of the city. By Odin! a light—he comes at last.—Nay though, 'tis my lady Dione! Sure her wits are turning; none but Longinus or a lunatic would want to air themselves up here at this time of night! Let us see!

(*Hides in an angle of the wall as DIONE enters R., carrying a lantern.*)

DIO. All still as death! What means this solitude?
Where are the sentinels? I have no means
Save to discharge my letter into camp (¹⁷)
Out of some engine, and my little strength

ACT III. SCENE II

Is far unequal to it. The night wears on :
Soon it will be too late ! I looked to find
Syrus on guard ; he would have helped my need :
And three days since his post was here.

(After looking vainly up and down the wall, she deposits her lantern, stoops to the pile of stones, selects one, and commences fastening her letter to it.)

Oh ! why

Must woman, who can long and love and hate
With passion beside which a man's is pale,
Be ever powerless, and owe her will
Only to man's complaisance, if indeed
He thwart her not even there ?

(She lifts the stone with difficulty to its place in the engine, and tries in vain to work it by pulling it backwards ; then bursting into tears and wringing her hands.)

Thou cruel thing !

That hast no heart nor feeling of my woes.
Thou manlike and insensible instrument,

(Beating the engine)

That only canst do hurt, and keep'st no part
For tenderness or pity ! Would that all
The pangs thou ever scattered'st could be pressed
In one fierce hour of quivering sentience,
To torture thy dull mass ! O misery
Of anguished woman's heart throughout the world,
Shrill your wild accent in the ears of Heaven
And make it pitiful now ! Stern Artemis,
Help thy weak maid ! Is't not a little boon ?
Try yet again !

(Makes a last and violent effort to work the engine, which refuses to move.)

Vain ! vain ! It will not be !

ACT III. SCENE II

(Still clasping the engine, she falls in a passion of sobs by its side, and faints away.)

MILO. *(Advancing.)* Faith, poor lady, I must cheer her spirits. But, for her letter, I know not: 'twere all as well, perchance, if it were not delivered. I have found that so with others ere now, when I came to the reading of the same. *(As he is crossing to DIO., he stops suddenly and listens; then, approaching the rampart, peers stealthily over it. He starts back immediately.)* By the hammer of Thor, here comes more company than was ever invited! A surprise! *(Hurries to DIO. and tries to rouse her.)* Quick, lady, quick! Rouse thee, and come with me! *(Bending attentively over her.)* Fainted, by Hercules! I may not stay to aid her: I must find Longinus and give the alarm.

(Picks up DIO.'S lantern, and exit L. rapidly. Enter, silently and swiftly over the ramparts, PROBUS, AGRIPPA, and ROMAN SOLDIERS.)

PRO. *(In low tones to a Centurion.)* Take twenty men at once: seize yonder tower! *(Pointing L.)*
We follow straight.

DIO. *(Reviving, and staring about her.)* Where am I?
Myrrha! Oh!

(Perceives SOLDIERS, and faints away again.)

PRO. Who was that spoke, Agrippa? Did you note
What seemed a light moving inside the wall
A minute since, just ere we reached the top?

(Discovers DIO. lying prostrate.)

A woman? Light there! *(A torch is kindled. PROBUS bends over her.)*

AGRIPPA. *(Catching sight of the letter in the engine.)*
Can this tell us aught?

(He unties it, and reads; then, with a suppressed exclamation, stoops over DIO.)

Probus, I know this lady; a near friend

ACT III. SCENE III

And confidante of the queen. Her errand here
Is clear from this—of vital import. Read !

(Handing paper.)

PRO. *(Reading.)* Zenobia in flight for Persia ! Gods !
Aurelian must know this instantly !

He would not lose her for a kingdom's fee !

(To a SOLDIER.) Bessus, descend at once ! deliver this
Straight to the Emperor—he waits even now

Before the Emesan gate : Agrippa, say,

Vouches the news authentic. Let him pass !

(Pushing aside the throng of still ascending SOLDIERS.)

Lose not a moment !

(Exit SOLDIER over the wall.)

AGRIPPA. *(Still bending over DIO.)* Probus, I'll entreat

Your care for this poor lady : she's not safe

Here on the wall : there'll be rough work ere dawn.

Send her to camp. You'll spare a brace of men

To lift her down the ladders ?

PRO.

'Tis the least

We can. Bestow her safely, two of you ;

And find her tendance. Come ! each minute lost

Is worth a province. Forward, to the gate !

(Exeunt OMNES L., except the two who remain with DIO.)

THE SCENE CLOSES.

SCENE III.—*A rocky ravine on the edge of the oasis. A starlit night. A few scattered palms and terebinths. On the right, in the side of the low hill which closes the back of the scene, the mouth of the covered way is dimly outlined through bushes by the torches of the approaching party. ZACCHÆUS and an ARAB SHEIKH awaiting them.*

ZAC. *(Impatiently.)* At last they come, Shiraz ! 'tis
past the time

ACT III. SCENE III

Almost an hour. Some trinket, I'll be sworn,
Hath kept this daughter of the Syrians,
That, woman-like, must spoil her beauty's gift
With wanton trickeries, though her life and state
Hang on the hazard !

SHEIKH. Be not wroth, my lord !
The moon is not yet risen : ere she shines,
Our camels will have sunk these towering palms
Behind them 'neath the horizon.

(Enter with torches from the passage ZENOBIA, LONGINUS, ZABDAS, MYRRHA, and six armed ATTENDANTS, carrying some slight baggage.)

ZEN. *(Eagerly.)* We are come,
Zacchæus ! Hast thou brought the promised beasts ?

ZAC. *(Swallowing his annoyance and saluting her.)* Ay,
lady ! they have waited thee an hour.

(Presenting SHEIKH.)

Here is your pilot : follow in his wake ;
Before to-morrow's sunset you shall stand
Upon Euphrates' brink, whose further shore
Gives safety. Mayst return with victory,
And in that hour forget not Israel !

(He kneels and kisses her hand.)

ZEN. Nor thee, our strangely-found deliverer !
If the petition of a fugitive
Can breed a blessing, may it rest on thee
And on thy people.

(ZAC. retires into the shadow R.)

ZAB. *(Impatiently.)* Madam, will you mount ?

ZEN. Immediately. Have they secured the gear ?
Look to it, Zabdass.

(Exeunt ZAB. and ATTENDANTS L.)

(To LONG.) Into thy charge we give

ACT III. SCENE III

The city : in our absence be ourself.
This seal confers the full validity
That our own word has carried. Use it, sir,
We say not faithfully—that cannot need—
But with all cheer and courage. The dark day
Comes as God's index of a hidden worth,
And candle to a man's nobility :
Let it illumine thine ! Our thoughts, our prayers,
Thou knowest, are always with thee. Fare thee well !

LONG. (*On his knee.*) Heaven bless and keep your
highness !

(*He rises, and exit by way of the passage, with one ATTEN-
DANT lighting him.*)

MYR. (*Pressing forward, and laying her hand eagerly on
ZENOBIA'S arm.*) Pray you, forgive me !

What was that man you talked with ?

ZEN. (*Absently, moving off L.*) What man, child ?

MYR. (*Imploringly.*) Oh, madam, but one moment——

ZEN. (*Turning as she is passing out.*) What ails the
girl ?

What is't to thee ?

MYR. (*Stammering.*) That voice ! I——

ZAB. (*Re-entering L., with urgent insistence.*) Why do
we wait ?

Away ! away ! your life depends on haste !

ZEN. We come ! we come ! Come, Myrrha ! as we ride
I'll answer thee at full.

(*Exeunt all L., except ZAC., who remains motionless,
watching the retreating party. The glow of the rising
moon is noticeable L.C., over the low banks of the ravine.
From some bushes at the extreme right emerge stealthily five
or six ROMAN SOLDIERS, who approach ZAC. in the rear,
and secure him as the curtain falls.*)

ACT III. SCENE IV

SCENE IV.—*The Desert, near Corsole, on the Euphrates* (18).

The wide horizon of sand is broken only by low, reddish, irregular rocks, by the broken trunk of a cedar glittering with salt, or by the skeleton of a camel. In the extreme left winds the broad green band of the Euphrates, some quarter of a mile distant. The whole scene dominated R.C. by an imperious pomp of sunset. ZAB. discovered supporting ZEN. and MYR., with Attendants strewing carpets and erecting rough awning, L.

ZAB. Here we must halt. Our travel has been such
As mocks pursuit ; and we may count ourselves
All but in safety. Yonder flows the stream !
But since we cannot trust our jaded beasts
To stem the current, we must find a means
To ferry you across. In the meantime
Snatch what repose—you have sore need of it !—
This short half-hour may grant.

ZEN. Thanks, Zabdas, thanks !
I am weariness itself.
(*Exeunt ZAB. and Attendants. ZEN., reclining on carpet
with MYR. at her feet, gazes into the dying sunset.*)

ZEN. How passing fair,
Night after night, that glory ! where Day sets
The limits of his march, and pitches tent,
And summons festal pageant. How it broods
O'er the hushed desert in a hundred dyes
Unmatched of mortal loom, while the tired Earth
Kneels to accept a blessing ere she sleep !
Can we behold such beauty and not feel
A presage and a promise, strong ally

ACT III. SCENE IV

Of hope against all tremblings, the sure smile
Of goodness that foretastes its victory?

MYR. It makes me sorrowful, madam ; as if the skies
Piled their magnificence to make a pyre
For some dead greatness, whose high funeral
Is charge to God Himself.

ZEN. It is because
You are inclined to sadness. Evermore
We colour Nature after our own hearts,
Making her augur of our happiness
Or prophet of despair. But be more brave !
Soon shall we see our city's walls again,
And there, thy father. These strange accidents
Amaze me still : it must be more than chance
That brought thee to Palmyra.—Prithee, sing
What gentle lullaby thou wilt : I'll sleep.
*(Reclines her head on a cushion, and falls asleep during the
following song.)*

MYR. *(Sings.)*

Shut of eve, and twilight pale !
Day has tasked her powers,
Told the children many a tale
Through the varying hours :
Now she has no more to tell ;
Sleep well, sleep well !

Vex no more the 'wildered heart,
Trouble not the brain :
All wherein thou play'dst a part
With the masquing train,
Weaving life's entangled plot,
Be now forgot.

ACT III. SCENE IV

Or if elfin memory still
Tread her wayward round;
Let her softest footfall fill
Sleep with echoing sound—
Freight of happy airs that blow
From long ago.

Darkness and the glittering arch !
Night's revealing shade
Bids us 'neath her million march
Slumber unafraid.
Order in the depth and height !
All's well ! Good-night !

(During this song the western glow has faded entirely, and stars are now discernible twinkling in the darkness.)

MYR. She sleeps ! I must be wakeful. Heavenly Power
Who watchest over all things, whose strong hand
Appointed these bright wanderers their course
Even from the beginning, be our guard,
And guide our footsteps to such prosperous end
As fits thy purposes !

(After a few minutes MYR.'s head droops, and she too falls asleep. On a curtain at the back are represented the dreams of the two women. ZEN.'s (R.C.) is of herself and LONGINUS reading Plato under a portico opening upon beautiful gardens. MYR.'s (L.C.) is of Jerusalem as seen from the Mount of Olives. After a few seconds is heard very faintly in the distance, R., the softened thud and scuffle of horses at a gallop over the sand. As the noise advances, the dreams of the two women undergo a change—ZEN.'s representing LONG., a prisoner, brought before AURELIAN ; MYR.'s representing her father's departure from the harbour of Alexandria, with herself weeping on the quay.)

•

ACT III. SCENE IV

ZEN. (*Moving uneasily in her sleep.*) Not yet! Stay
but a little—she will surely come!

He is not guilty! stay!

(*She wakes, starts up suddenly, and listens.*)

Myrrha! Awake!

Are we pursued?

(*The noise grows louder and louder: then suddenly stops, and is followed by the clang of armour and weapons, as of men dismounting. A voice, R., "Secure them!" Countershout heard off, L. As the two women start up, a band of Roman soldiers rush in with torches, R. Before they can reach the queen, re-enter, L., ZABDAS with his men, and throw themselves before her.*)

ZAB. (*Rushing in.*) Too late! but not too late
To strike one blow for what is more than life!

(*After a brief struggle, the handful of Palmyrenes are overpowered; and ZAB. falls, mortally wounded. ZEN. breaks from the Roman soldiers who have seized her and MYR., and kneels over him.*)

ZEN. Speak, Zabdas, noble friend!

ZAB. (*In a faint voice.*) Lady, we hope,
And strive, and all but conquer; and at last,
Even in the dawn of conquest, are struck down,
Vanquished, despoiled, crushed by a stronger fate
That robs us of our prize! and then we know
That not in victory lies happiness,
But in the having striven. (*Struggles to raise himself: the effort is too much for him.*) So? (*Falls back.*) Good-night! (*Dies.*)

ZEN. (*Bends over him, her hand at his heart and lips: then rising, with solemnity*)
That known, is victory! Soldier, good-night!

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*It is the afternoon of the second day after the fall of the city. The scene is laid in the same Hall of Zenobia's Palace as in Act II. Scene II. Chair of state L. Enter in state the EMPEROR AURELIAN, the upper part of his face shrouded by a short dark gauze veil worn beneath the helmet. He is conferring with FELIX. PROBUS, AGRIPPA, and other Roman Officers and Guards in attendance.*

AUR. (*To FEL.*) I use, but praise not traitors. Stand aside,
But within call. Hereafter, if you learn
How to serve honestly, our mind may change.

(*FELIX retires.*)

Thus far, my friends, we have been strange to you.
Our wound craved rest, and we had closer ends
Requiring tendance; but if Fortune's mood,
Kindlier now for bounty long withheld,
Affect no new displeasure, all our toils
Draw to a close. The city yields herself
Almost without a blow, her gorgeous fanes
And palaces unharmed, as though she hailed
This vindication of imperial right,
And smiled upon our victory. Remains
To exact deserved penalty from those
That have seduced her loyalty, and pay
To the infuriate legions the revenge

ACT IV. SCENE I

Their wounds and labours ask. Zenobia
Evades her punishment by flight, but leaves
Her counsellors in madness. Have they found
What hole the rhetorician has crept into,
Longinus?

PRO. Hitherto our utmost search
Is fruitless, Cæsar.

AUR. He'll come forth anon :
Even a philosopher must eat at whites,
Or talk at least.

(He takes his seat upon the chair of state.)

Go, summon here again
That sullen greybeard whom the soldiers took
Prowling two nights ago along the verge
Of the oasis.

*(Exit a SOLDIER, who re-enters presently with ZACCH.,
remaining in the background till later in the scene.)*

Something in his face
Mistrusts me. Where is the centurion
Who captured him?

SOLD. *(Stepping forward.)* Here, Cæsar.

AUR. Said you not
You heard a distant galloping of horse?

SOLD. Ay, Cæsar, eastwards. But the light was dim ;
We saw not aught. *(Retires.)*

AUR. Call Clitus, and Seleucus. *(Exeunt some SOLDs.)*
'Tis time we saw our traitor. *(To PRO.)* Saidst thou not
It was thy secretary by whom he tried
To doctor thee in Egypt?

PROB. Ay, my lord ;
But the strange knave is strangely disappeared,
And with him overt proof. I know not why :
Methought the rascal loved me.

ACT IV. SCENE I

AUR. Proof enough
Against Seleucus lies in his delay.
A four months' siege! He played a double game
Here, as in Egypt. But we shall see.

(*Re-enter SOLD. R. with CLITUS, in deep dejection.*)

AUR. (*To CLITUS.*) Well, sir!
How fares your daughter? we are bound to her,
And must be more indebted. Is she yet
Able to answer question?

CLIT. (*With clasped hands.*) Oh, my lord,
Have we not shame enough?—She wanders yet.
The feverish fit hath spent its violence,
But left a heavy lassitude; most times
She is sunk in slumber; when she wakes, her words
Are still but incoherence. 'Tis in vain
To question her at present.

AUR. We will wait.
Look to her well.

(*Exit CLITUS R. Enter SEL., who approaches the throne
with assurance.*)

SEL. Hail, Cæsar! here at length
My knee pays rightful homage, and my voice,
To simulated vows constrained too long,
Welcomes you to Palmyra.

AUR. (*Coldly.*) Ay, too long!
There thou speak'st truth!—This troublesome hurt of ours
Must plead excuse, sir, for the privacy
Kept since our entry.

SEL. 'Tis not serious,
I humbly hope. I see our Syrian sun
Troubles your eyes, my lord.

AUR. (*Grimly.*) Ay, we have felt

ACT IV. SCENE I

Its fervour some four months ! your airy halls
Are welcomer for it.

SEL. And now, my lord, I trust
To serve your just revenges.

AUR. (*Coldly.*) A fair hope!
'Tis like our justice will require yourself,
Whose large desert may speedily expect
Its proper recompense.

(Uproar in the square without. Enter R. hurriedly, a SOLDIER.)

SOLD. Caesar, great news !
Thou hast Zenobia ! made prisoner
Even on the river's very brink ; and there
Zabdas her general slain ! She waits below
Among the soldiers, who are hardly kept
From tearing her in pieces.

AUR. (*Exultantly.*) 'Tis complete!
Here's that will drink thee into happiness!

(Throwing him a purse.)

Bring her before me. (*Exit SOLD.*) Now by all the gods,
And, chief, the sacred splendour of that orb
Which crowns me with perpetual victory,
All else was toys to this !

(Enter ZEN. and MYR. R., as prisoners.)

And this is she
Who played at hazard with an emperor,
Who held our embassies of as much weight
As the commission of some petty chief,
Tyrant of half a dozen villages !
Who would refine our grosser taste with tales
Of beasts and marvellous wood-cutters, and add
Lessons in soldiership as we progressed !
These elements acquired, we now invite

ACT IV. SCENE I

Zenobia's aid in a yet harder task,
To unriddle her own madness.

ZEN. Must thou needs
Trample the foe thou hast o'erthrown, and drink
Thy conquest to the dregs?

AUR. Then thou dost own
Us conqueror? We hardly hoped so much;
Though in this chair, usurped so long, we sit
To visit thy presumption.

ZEN. Victory owned
Leaves much to prove. A generous soul disdains
To make its triumph the mere carnival
Of cruelty and insult. For what's past,
Palmyra scorned allegiance to a prince
That dared not punish injuries, but drowned
In wine the smart of Persian insolence.
Not to a Gallienus could we bow;
Nor yet to Claudius! Aurelian proves
Of different mould: his strength compels our knee;
Let him be generous, if he craves respect.

AUR. (*With a chuckle, to PROBUS.*) Fago¹ would find
a certain humour here
(*To ZEN.*) A helmet, lady, somewhat dulls our brain
For niceties—we yield philosophy:
And clemency pleads best from other lips
Than the offender's. Our displeasure rests
Not on thee only, but thy counsellors;
And, most, the Greek, Longinus. He is hid:
And thou must tell us where.

ZEN. And canst thou ask
That, from a queen, which not the meanest hind

¹ Aurelian's favourite jester. See Note 9, p. 129.

ACT IV. SCENE I

Who paid her tribute would have stooped unto?
 Zenobia may be vanquished, prisoner,
 Dethroned, a common mock—but traitress, no ! (18)

AUR. Art thou so certain of their loyalty?
 Thou hast not heard, then, of the pretty note
 Whereby two nights ago thy bosom-friend
 Informed us of thy flight?

ZEN. Dione ! Nay,
 She could not know ; and could not violate
 Our friendship, had she known.

AUR. And yet she did ;
 As this must show you. (*Handing her DIO.'s letter.*) We
 are debtor, too,

For Egypt to a kinsman of your own,
 Seleucus here (*beckoning SEL. forward*) ; and by his timely aid
 We climbed your battlements.

ZEN. (*To SEL.*) Thou art too base
 For my reproaching ! On what crawling thing
 Canst thou have been begotten, that unshamed
 Stand'st to outface such treachery to her blood
 Whose glory lifted even thee, whose fall
 Marks thee for spitting to the end of time ?

(*SELEUCUS breaks into coarse laughter.*)

AUR. You relish this, Seleucus ?

SEL. Let her rail !
 I have the Emperor's friendship.

AUR. (*Drily.*) And shall taste
 His bounty in due season. (*To ZEN.*) But there's yet
 Another instance. (*To an Attendant*) Summon here the
 Prince.

ZEN. (*Agonised.*) The Prince !

SEL. (*To AUR.*) Were it not well to sacrifice
 This rebel's whelp unto the soldiery ?

ACT IV. SCENE I

'Twould stay their fury, and be argument
To make her speak.

AUR. (*After withering pause.*) We'll find the legions meat
Anon, Seleucus. (*Enter Attendant with VAB. L. AUR. caresses
him with feigned graciousness.*) Well, my pretty lord !
Wilt thou fulfil thy promises erewhile
To tell thy mother's secrets ? There she stands,
Our prisoner ; and thy voice may help us much,
And build thee fortune from her punishment.

VAB. (*Eagerly.*) Ay, Cæsar, I can help thee ; I can show
Her cabinet, where the secret papers are,
Written from Rome or Persia : I'll repeat
A hundred bitter words she spake of thee,
And many—

(*During this speech ZEN. has sunk upon the ground,
covering her face with her hands.*)

AUR. (*Smiting him across the mouth.*) Enough ! remove
the prating cub :
We'll physic him anon. (*To ZEN.*) Art thou convinced ?
Or need we point thee to thy subject towns,
Ancyra, Tarsus, Antioch, Emesa,
Which welcomed us ? or to thy trusted aids,
Saracen, Persian ? or thy capital,
Yielded without a struggle ? Not a strength
But failed on trial ; and that oily tongue,
To whose cajolery thou owest thy plight,
Was traitor most. Then visit on his head
The lies which earned his momentary rank,
And taste our clemency.

ZEN. (*Risen to her feet.*) If all trust fail,
More needs Zenobia to be true herself ;
Lest her defection be the fatal stroke
That 'whelms the tottering cause of honesty,

ACT IV. SCENE I

And leaves the world all base. I was myself,
Defying thee : I will not now be less.

(The uproar outside, which has never ceased since ZEN.'s arrival, now increases. Cries are distinguishable. "Victims!" "Give us Zenobia!" "Where is Longinus?" "Longinus and the Queen!")

AUR. Dost hear that clamour ? 'Tis the voice of men
Who for four months have borne your Syrian blaze
'Mid wounds and hunger—

(He is interrupted by a sudden inrush of SOLDIERS, uttering the same cries. AURELIAN springs from his seat, and fells the foremost to the ground. The rest hesitate, and recoil.)

Back ! you mutinous dogs !

Will ye invade our very judgment-seat ?
And deafen us with shouting ? Now, by Mars,
Ye shall pay dear for this ! Back there, I say !

(Still threatening them with his sword.)

SOLDIERS. *(Sullenly, thronging the doorway.)* Victims !
We will have victims !

AUR. *(To his Guards, pointing out two ringleaders.)*

Seize him there !

And him ! Victims ? You shall afford them first !
Put them in irons ! Now, is there yet some fool
Will try conclusions with us ? Forth with you !
Ye shall have victims ; I have promised it :
But, by the Sun, they shall be of my gift,
Not of your taking. So—begone !

(Exeunt SOLDIERS, murmuring. AUR. touches the slain SOLDIER with his foot.)

Cart out

This carrion, too much honoured in our stroke !

(The body is dragged off.)

ACT IV. SCENE I

AUR. (*As he resumes his seat on the dais, aside to PROBUS, pulling him by the ear.*)

Was't prompt enough? I think but thou and I
 Know the right medicine for the rascals, what?
 (*Turning to ZEN.*) By this example judge! The legions' rage
 Will not be appeased by talk; it asks for blood!
 Mercy must be deserved. Dost think it naught
 To have defied two embassies, and brought
 The Roman armies half across the world
 To thy chastising? Here were we encamped
 Month after arduous month 'mid countless toils,
 While Italy jested at her emperor
 At war with women and with schoolmasters,
 And held its shaking sides at ribald bards
 Who spill their venom on the Cœlian.⁽²⁰⁾
 They knew not thee! If vengeance spare thyself,
 It slants on thine advisers, most of all
 On this officious Greek, this thruster-in
 To affairs not his: his life must purchase thine.
 I could more easily pardon, did he live,
 Zabdas, thy fiery man-at-arms, whose sword
 Has wrested kingdoms from us: but this sophist—!
 Tempt us no more.

ZEN. (*With quiet firmness.*) Thou hast no argument
 In all thine arsenal of force or guile
 That can compel Zenobia's treachery.

AUR. (*After a steadfast gaze, which ZEN. confronts unmoved, turns with an impatient gesture.*) Have you the
 prisoner whom I bade attend?

SOLDIER. (*Thrusting forward ZACCHÆUS.*) Here,
 Cæsar!

MYRRHA. (*Starting forward.*) Father!

PROBUS.

Coelius!

ACT IV. SCENE I

- SEL. (*Aside.*) Coelius !
He must be silenced, then : but close, awhile !
- AUR. (*Regarding ZACCHÆUS.*) That face is not all strange.
- PRO. Nor to myself.
This is the man, my secretary, not seen
Since first we came to camp.
- AUR. And ta'en that night
Whereon Zenobia fled ; in which same flight
He was confederate, I'll be sworn, and knows
Longinus' present hiding. Didst thou note
How yonder girl found voice ? (*To MYRRHA.*) You, mistress ! you !
Stand forth, and teach your modesty to attend
Our question. Is the man thy father ? Speak !
- MYR. (*With clasped hands.*) He is, my lord ! but 'tis
an eight years' space
Since we have greeted.
- AUR. Thou dost serve the queen ?
- PRO. She shared her flight.
- AUR. Ay ! then herself can tell
The path by which they fled. Now, shy-face, speak !
(*MYR. bursts into tears.*)
Nay, by the sun, this is too tedious.
Speak, you sir ! (*To ZAC.*) Were you privy to their flight ?
(*ZAC. remains sullenly silent.*)
- SEL. A taste of the pincers or the scourge, my lord,
Is often potent. Try it on the girl,
Or on her father, we shall have them both
Give tongue at once.
- AUR. (*Turning to SEL.*) Thou'st proved the remedy
By frequent use, Seleucus, hast thou not ?
- SEL. Why, 'tis of use.

ACT IV. SCENE I

AUR. And gives a kind of zest
Unto authority ?

SEL. (*Laughing.*) A piquant sauce !

AUR. (*Slowly.*) A subtle taste ! one like thyself was born
To wield a sceptre ! we shall soon enlarge
Thy knowledge of these methods.

(*The cries for victims rise again from without.*)

AUR. (*To ZAC.*) Sirrah, speak !
Dost know my medicine for this stubbornness ?

ZAC. (*Breaking silence.*) Ay, if thou beest Aurelian !
and each pang
Thy nod ordains makes heavier yet the doom⁽²¹⁾
Even now o'erhanging thee !

AUR. (*Half speechless.*) Am I emperor ?

ZAC. Until God's anger strike thee from a seat
Red with thy tyranny, of which this arm (*Bares his shrivelled
and branded left arm*) Carries the proof. I never did
thee wrong :

Why then do I drag this seared and useless limb ?
It cries for vengeance : if it fall not now,
Yet it will fall and blast thee ! Even here
Have I not baulked thee ? I contrived their flight ;
I taught Longinus where to shelter him ;
And sooner shall this soul and body part
Than thou shalt know't. Thou hast a thousand foes
Stubborn as I. How canst thou compass truth,
Whose seat is ringed with fears and flatterers
That lie for safety ? Round a tyrant's walk
Is treachery rife : it leans upon his hand,
Smiles at his banquet, sports, nay ! sleeps with him,
And having bought a quaking privilege
By slaughter of its fellows, turns at last
And makes its terror nothing ! yonder stands,

ACT IV. SCENE I

To whet thy cruelty, a fawning hound,
Whose fangs anon shall fasten on thy flesh.
Question Seleucus of the heavy sum
Offered of late upon his guarantee
To Cœlius in Egypt, but to slip
A sleeping-potion in his master's drink.
Probus can tell thee.

AUR. (*Aside to PROBUS, after conferring with him apart.*)

We must temporize,

Or go without his knowledge.

SEL. (*In great agitation.*) Cæsar knows
My services in Egypt: they are proof
How much this rascal lies.

AUR. (*Dispassionately.*) Why, that may be:
Lies, as he saith, are common. We will look
Closer.

(*He beckons the guards, who close round SEL. Again the
cry for victims rises from without.*)

AUR. (*To ZACCHÆUS.*) Sirrah, we recollect thee now
As of that faction of intriguing Jews
Who felt our hand in Rome. Yet of thyself
We might be misinformed: and, though thy tongue
Wags at us like an ale-wife's, and the tune
Is one our ears want custom to make sweet,
We overlook it. Prove thyself of use,
Fasten this foul plot on Seleucus there;
Thou mayest yet win pardon for thyself,
And free thy daughter.

ZAC. Can thy pardon teach
The shrivelled sinews of this arm to swell?
Can it efface the brand of bitterness
Stamped on this heart? Not the great God Himself
Undoes the past, or more than mitigates

ACT IV. SCENE I

The stern succession of its consequence.
 'Tis for my daughter's sake, not mine, I speak.
 I have served Probus well—he used me well :
 Else had he died in Egypt, where his life
 Hung by a thread. Three thousand sesterces
 Were promised on Seleucus' guarantee
 By one called Felix.

SEL. Rascals of that name
 Swarm through the empire. He can bring no proof
 Connecting him with me.

AUR. (*To ZAC.*) Describe the man.

ZAC. Taller than common, dark, with a hooked nose,
 And something of a stammer.

AUR. (*Reflectively.*) And called Felix ?

ZAC. Ay.

AUR. Had he not a sword-cut on his cheek ?

ZAC. The same ! the same !

AUR. (*To FELIX in background.*) Come forth. (*FELIX advances.*)

(*To ZACCH.*) Is that your man ?

(*SELEUCUS starts involuntarily, but instantly recovers his self-command.*)

ZAC. 'Tis he !

AUR. Felix, do you deny the tale ?

FEL. I cannot, being that myself proclaimed.

AUR. Good !—Now, Seleucus, do you know this fellow ?

SEL. Not I ! Cæsar knows well that men of mark
 Are a mere target for the informing tribe
 To shoot their slander at. It lacks all proof.
 I never saw the man.

AUR. (*With great deliberation.*) The memory
 Of men of mark busied with great affairs
 Must needs be short. We shall remind you, then,

ACT IV. SCENE I

How once before the war, you and the prince
 Would rape the old man's daughter there, and charged
 Felix and Glabrio to carry her
 Unto his lodging; which they failed to do,
 Prevented, as I think, by one Marcellus,
 Who put that mark on him. Dost know me yet?
 Or must I jog thy memory of a talk
 Held with Marcellus 'bout an Emperor
 Fond of a wench and his Falernian,
 Bloody withal, and not so firmly fixed
 In the Roman chair, but that a close intrigue
 Might chance to unseat him? Dost not know me yet?
 Then see!

(He removes his helmet with the veil attached to it, and reveals the features of MARCELLUS.)

ZEN., MYR., AND OTHERS. *(Together.)* Marcellus!

AUR. *(Gravely.)* Ay, lady! that sad knight,
 Your two months' wearisome petitioner,
 Was one unused to beg, who found those weeks
 A wholesome purge for pride, too prone to see
 In the distorting glass of flattery
 A swollen and dropsied image. *(Turns to SEL.)* But for
 thee—

SEL. *(Grovvelling at his feet.)* Mercy! I'll serve thy
 kitchen! Mercy yet!

AUR. *(Sternly, spurning him with his foot—cries still without.)*

As thou wast merciful! Dost hear my dogs
 Roar for their meat? Their feeding-time has come;
 And thine for payment! Not a shift will serve:
 Thou art run down in the open!—Prick him forth *(to*
Guards),
 And prick for company that dastard cub,

ACT IV. SCENE I

Wherewith we shamed his dam some half-hour since.
Forth with them !

(SEL. and VAB., *shrieking and imploring, are driven out at the spear-point, ZEN. hiding her face. A yell of triumph greets their appearance outside ; the noise continues for some seconds, and then gradually subsides.*)⁽²²⁾

AUR. (*To ZAC.*) Thou hast served us well indeed !
Complete the service : tell us, since thou knowest,
Where lurks Longinus, and at once be free,
Thou and yon pretty piece of modesty
Who calls herself thy child.

ZAC. Can Cæsar speak
A double language ? is he to be served
Only by traitors, or is treachery none
That helps himself ?

AUR. (*Aside to PROBUS.*) This honesty's too shrewd.
(*Scuffle without, L. Enter MILO, forcing way through the guards.*)

MILO. Way, there ! way, I say ! important business to the
Emperor. (*To one of the guards.*) Now then, ton o' guts !
Dost think the world made for nothing but big paunches ?

AUR. (*Amused, to PRO.*) Hercules, doubtless, to felicitate our victory !

MILO. The mistake is very natural—the likeness has
been often noticed : but I am Milo the Goth.

AUR. Indeed !

MILO. (*With nervous courage.*) Yes ! I don't think we
ever met before. (*Brief pause.*) Er—I am Milo the
Goth.

AUR. (*With pleasant composure.*) So you were good
enough to observe. And your business ?

MILO. There is one Longinus—a simple, absent-minded
creature, but I've a great respect for him : there is much the

ACT IV. SCENE I

poor man cannot do for himself, and I am accustomed to assist him in many little matters.

AUR. The story is deeply interesting. Pray go on.

MILO. (*More assured.*) Well, nothing will serve but he must see you. I told him you were a busy man, but he persisted—so I said I would see about it.

AUR. Thou hast not served in arms?

MILO. No mistaking a military man, is there? In my youth, Cæsar, there were some trifles—some deeds and battles; but I shine not in it now. Rather I try—

AUR. Come, fellow! try not us. Where is thy master?

MILO. (*Sulkily.*) Waiting this long while in the queen's cabinet.

AUR. (*To the guards.*) Find, and conduct him hither.

(*Exit SOLDIER. After a moment's conference with PRO.,*

AUR. *notices MILO, still shifting awkwardly in front of throne.*)

Stand aside;

Learn manners, and thou shalt not lack thy meat.

MILO. (*Aside as he retires.*) Manners! to an Athenian! But you shall always find your man of affairs a fool in somewhat.

AUR. All's ours at length! and (*sternly to ZAC.*) without aid of thine.

Thou hoary prating Honesty, that presumed'st

To snatch our victims from us, what if now

Thy boldness taste the judgment it deserves?

Canst thou arraign us?

ZAC. (*With MYR., in a hard despairing tone.*) Nay, destroy us both:

Such act were but the crown and complement

Of former acts. That outrage is the least

Which scourges life beyond thy tyranny.

ACT IV. SCENE I

'Tis but a step through that ensanguined gate
Where multitudes have entered, with a smile
Lighting their weary faces, a new hope
Breaking in hearts that never tasted joy.
Its bloody portal passed, I shall have peace ;
And this poor innocence !

(Embracing and hiding his face on MYR.'S shoulder.)

PROB.

Cæsar, I kneel.

He hath suffered much ; his desperate plot is foiled ;
And here his honesty hath served us well
Touching Seleucus. Witness these hot drops,
His seared heart knows the touch of tenderness.
See how he folds her ! so the savage rock,
Scarred by the lightning's passage, nurses yet
In some high cleft the hidden hare-bell's grace,
Or tender green of moss. I'll pledge myself,
Pardon shall make him harmless.

MYR. (*Quitting ZAC. and kneeling before AUR.*) Good
my lord,

By that brave service you once did myself,
Your pardon now !

AUR. (*Drily to PROB.*) I have constantly observed
That one imprudent kindness draws in train
At least a dozen others. (*To MYR.*) Have thy wish !
Even in ourself, whate'er the world suppose,
Rough commerce of the camp and battlefield
Hath spared some nook for pity. (*To ZAC.*) Thou art free.
Dwell with thy pretty maid where'er thou wilt,
Jerusalem or Rome. We shall essay
To mend the wrong our hasty justice wrought ;
And, if thou canst, Zacchæus (*lower tone*), teach thyself
To think of us more kindly.
(*MYR. and ZAC. retire. Re-enter SOLDIERS with LONGINUS.*)

ACT IV. SCENE I

AUR. (*To LONG.*) Hast thou dared
To thrust thy head into the lion's mouth?
Sure 'twas a madness only less than that
Which drove a bookman's vanity to strut
On the great stage of empire. 'Tis a walk
Studded with pitfalls, sir; your doctor's gown
Might scarce escape a rending or a soil.
Better have hugged your cloister!

LONG. Not for grace
I come, nor to dispute. I come to claim
My due precedence in your wrath; 'twas I
Advised Zenobia.

ZEN. Shall Zenobia stand
Meekly to hear her queenship talked away?
Longinus was my instrument; no more:
For a year he strove in vain to alter me.

AUR. What frenzy, then, clouded his better wits,
And puffed his brain to spawn that insolence
Agrippa brought for answer?

LONG. 'Tis enough,
I wrote it, and stand here to answer it.

AUR. (*Overmastered by his temper.*) Ay, 'tis enough!
why do we bandy words?
A madman masquing in a cynic's gown!
And so, to allay this fever in thy brains,
Thou diest at sunset!

ZEN. (*Passionately.*) This is tyranny,
Not justice! such an act as will disgrace
Aurelian ever.

AUR. (*With recovered dignity—coldly.*) Lady, to your-
self
Our thoughts intend all kindness: see you frame
Your efforts to deserve it. To your care,

ACT IV. SCENE I

Probus, she is entrusted When we set
Our march towards Rome, we leave you governor
Of the East and of Palmyra. (*Rises to depart.*)

ZEN. (*Crying after him in despair.*) Cæsar! my lord!
This must not be—such haste is madness' self!

(AURELIAN waves her away. *She appeals with clasped hands to PROBUS.*)

Sir, you are good; you will help me to prevent
This murder, this——

PROB. (*In a constrained tone.*) I am sorry for you,
madam:

I can do naught; I serve the Emperor.

(*Again she turns, and, running, throws herself on her knees before AURELIAN as he is passing out.*)

ZEN. (*To AUR.*) Grant us at least some conference.

AUR. (*Unmoved.*) To what end?

Tears and reproaches cannot give you back
Your broad dominions, nor respite him.
Yet of our charity, that you may not call
Our justice churlish, we will pleasure you.

(*Aside to PROBUS.*)

Withdraw your men; but leave them not too long
Alone together.

(*Exeunt AURELIAN and all except LONGINUS and ZENOBIA. While the stage clears, she has remained sunk upon the ground, her head buried in her hands. She now rises and approaches LONGINUS, her step firm, her voice quiet and steady.*)

ZEN. Was this act well done?

Is it not a kind of avarice to engross
All greatness to thyself, and leave thy friend
Naught but the muddy lees of selfish gain
To make her cheer?

ACT IV. SCENE I

LONG. (*Turning from her, in a low, despondent tone*)

Oh justly-punished crime,
That such a praise would palliate! the dull lapse
Of uncrowned years shall edge your bitterest curse
Upon that traitorous sleep of my resolve
Which, thrown entire in the wavering scale, had saved
Your seat to years of happiness.

ZEN. (*With conviction.*) Nay, of shame!

LONG. (*As before.*) Had I stood firm! there came a
wandering gleam

That seemed of heaven indeed, yet was a light
That flickers o'er the marsh—or airy vision
Forged in the sunbeat traveller's heated brain,
That lures him with the cool of waving woods,
Wide-glittering lakes, and gorgeous palaces,
To stagger parched and blinded o'er the waste,
Till on the upcast of a bloodshot eye
Flickers the circling shadow of foul wings
That soon shall swoop.

ZEN. By all that's noble, no!
It was no mirage juggled you. Clear-eyed,
Clear-hearted, was that instant: and that choice
Of justice against odds leapt as a flame
From out the embers of a slumbrous time—

LONG. (*With bitterness.*) To quench itself in blackness!

ZEN. (*She begins quietly.*) Must I turn
Thy tutor, to acquaint thee that is great
Which greatly aims and struggles? Though it fail,
Its memory is a lamp where good men turn
'Mid tears and toils unmarked, outshining far
The tinselled shrines at which a low world pays
Its damning adoration. Would'st thou be
That pitiful thing which never dares to stand

ACT IV. SCENE I

Frankly itself, but worms, and creeps and halts,
 And creeps again, watching the dreaded hint
 Of a fool world's displeasure, till at length
 It issues safe, the mode's sleek favourite ?
 What joy has such an one on cushioned seat,
 Chapleted, hymned, without that inner glow,
 The smile of God, that warms the heart of him
 Who grasps a fearless purpose in both hands,
 And smites ! Thou hast that smile, for thou hast dared !
 And this bold deed, untarnished by success,
 Goes down the ages to acquaint mankind
 Of one that looked askance at petty life
 Seared with the withering touch of compromise ;
 And so drew sword, and shouted battle-cry,
 And, where the war was deadliest, fell, and stepped
 Into the Eternal presence undismayed.

(During this speech LONGINUS has been watching her attentively, and now his answer rings proudly and firmly.)

LONG. Canst brave it thus ? The ignominious years
 Harbour no threat to such a constancy !
 The weakness was all mine : I am strong again.
 Lo, here I kneel unto that spirit I found
 Peerless on earth ; and passing to those seats
 Where about Plato couched on asphodel
 Throng the glad souls, and drink that other fount
 Whose deathless name is Socrates, I'll say
 I left their fellow here, who but delays
 To join that feast of sweet society,
 Where earth's mischance is matter for a smile.

ZEN. *(Saddening.)* It will content thee, then, that
 fellowship ?

There will be nothing wanting, not a sigh
 To ruffle that fair haven's summer calm ?

ACT IV. SCENE I

No breath of aught unsatisfied, nor thought
Sent wandering down the lone abyss of stars
Unto one dark and tempest-ravaged isle,
Where famish shipwrecked souls? Thou hast no tear
For anything that loved thee or thou lov'dst?
Thou part'st without a pang?

LONG. (*Brokenly.*) Nay, spare me this :
The pass is steep enough !

ZEN. (*Same tone of sad reverie.*) Why, thou dost well :
I blame thee not ! What witchcraft juggles us
To cling to what would choke us? to abide
This stealth of years that trample us and pass,
Each with its gibbering masque of mocking hopes,
Each with its bitter potion of salt tears,
Each with its irremediable theft,
A friend, a grace, a faculty ; and all
Warping to hard and cruel, deepening
The soilure on us ?

LONG. (*Trying to comfort her.*) Dear lady, but the end
Comes surely, and the harvest : severed friends
Are clasped afresh, and all the taint outworn.

ZEN. (*With new decision.*) Ay, we shall meet, but
sooner than thou think'st.

'Tis I, not Plato, who shall welcome thee.
Didst think I would accept a shrunken life
At hands of yonder laurelled boor, while thou
Pay'dst penalty for both ? My veins have drawn
Too much from Cleopatra ! See, my lord,
My conduct to Elysium !

(*She draws from her breast, and opens, a phial of poison.*
LONGINUS rushes to prevent her drinking. Holding him off
with her left hand, she drains the contents of the phial, and
flings it from her. Then exultantly)

ACT IV. SCENE I

Thus I mount,
And ride once more across the glimmering waste
Into the morning ! On the river's brink
No need to halt ; there waits the ferryman,
Newly returned from carrying Zabdas o'er :
And I shall have fair passage. Follow soon,
Dear heart,—oh, soon ! I cannot lack thee long.

(She staggers, and falls upon a couch.)

LONG. *(Chafing her hands.)* My queen ! my mistress !

ZEN. *(Faintly, her eyes closed.)* What ! no more but so ?
Art thou so meek ? Thou should'st have been my king,
And shalt be yet. But first, the victory ;
The doubt, the peril to brave ; the crown to achieve :
And after, we'll not reckon gain or loss,
We'll take no count of the dumb pitiless years,
We will be spendthrifts of our happiness,
Children a-holiday, with an unsummed wealth
Of springtides, shadowless . . . [*her voice trails off inaudibly.*]

LONG. *(In a troubled voice.)* 'Tis the potent fume
Of the drug : she raves !—Swift ! swift ! oh terrible one !
Shear from the stalk this lily ere gust or blight
Ravage its pure perfection.

ZEN. *(Indistinctly and painfully.)* Dear, dear love !
Wilt thou not answer ? Trust me in all the world
Thou wast the single jewel that I craved
To enrich my coronet.—Silent ? oh, then, hush
Poor heart ! thou hast waited long, but shame us not :
We women must be quiet.

LONG. *(Apart, powerfully moved.)* Comes the dream
true ?

Oh death, be stronger than my weakness, haste !

ZEN. *(Suddenly raising herself, her eyes wide.)* It is not
true ! he is mine—he is mine—I know it !

ACT IV. SCENE I

(*Groping blindly with her hands.*) Where? where? Art gone?—The darkness comes apace:

Yet there is time.—(*With a flash of old imperiousness.*)

Summon my lord again!

What! are we queen? does no one stir?

LONG. (*Soothingly.*)

I am here;

Be calm, dear lady.

ZEN. (*Sinking back with a smile.*) I am abused!
methought

They had reft me ere I could discharge my debt,

And set against the sum of thy great worth

My paltry woman's fee.—How shall I speak?

What—

(*She hesitates—then raising herself suddenly with out-stretched arms.*)

Love—forgive me! wilt thou not spare one kiss
In pledge thou wilt not scorn me when thou comest
Fresh from thy triumph, through the halls of heaven?

LONG. (*Clasping her with a passionate cry.*)

Mine! mine! my spirit shall claim and single thine,

And pay no meaner dues nor fealty

Through all eternity.

(*They are locked in a long embrace, from which ZENOBIA falls back dead. A long pause, LONGINUS kneeling by the couch.—A single trumpet sounds without.*)

PROB. (*At the door R.*) The time draws on:
You must suspend your conference.

LONG. (*Rising.*)

It is done.

Enter,—nay, enter, sir; and have no fear

To break our converse: for those high concerns

Which asked a queen's participation are sped;

And she is gone from council, leaving us

Such clerkly office and mechanic chare,

ACT IV. SCENE I

Such poor remains of mighty business,
As meaner care may handle. Come, behold
A sight shall daunt your vision, and make sere
The nodding honours on your master's brow,
Leaving his triumph blank !

PRO. (*Entering with Guards, starts back in horror.*)

Gods ! how fell this ?

LONG. It seems she carried poison in her robes,
And, being captive, used it for a key
To unlock her prison-gates, and so walked forth
To liberty. I strove to hinder her,
But saw the intent too late.

PRO. O fatal trust,
And purpose half-divined ! but how came she
By such a means ?

LONG. She must have furnished her
Before she fled.

PRO. O timeless overthrow !
Of how much grace and sweet nobility
Is our rough world made orphan ! Sir, mine eyes,
Made traitors to a Roman fortitude,
Shame not for such a womanhood as this
To play the woman. In all time to come,
When men would praise some flower of womankind
For gracious dignity of golden words,
For fearless heart that held its course uncowed,
For animating fire of glorious hopes
Beyond our faithless measure, they shall say
So spake, so dared, so dreamed Zenobia !

LONG. So shall they ! yet not know the wrong they do
In the comparison of lesser worth
With what must aye be peerless !

(*Enter, R., CLITUS. His air is one of the deepest shame*

ACT IV. SCENE I

and dejection, and during the following speech he does not raise his eyes.)

CLITUS. I am come
From one that weeps and prays and wrings her hands,
And finds no comfort ; an unhappy girl
Maddened by love's mischance, who thought to stake
Friendship and faith for dreams of happy life,
And knew not that the throw was desperate !
One who, long wandering in a twilight land,
A stranger to herself, gathers at length
From the confused and tangled skein of thought
Some clue to know her act, and finds its shame
Intolerable ; and, nigh distraught again,
Amid the wreck of all she had and hoped,
Craves only pardon, pardon !

LONG. (*Sadly.*) How inept,
To what an impotent and idle tune,
Limps in this message ! In this world how oft
The melancholy story is retold,
Of penitence returning to unload
Its debt of trespass to some loving heart
Whose beat is stilled, whose kindly impulse cold !
Oh, good old friend ! Dione sends too late !

CLITUS. (*In alarm.*) How—sends too late ?
Zenobia—— ?

LONG. (*Solemnly.*) Is not here !
She is gone forth on progress : even now
She sights the gate of some fair capital,
That pours from all its palaces and towers
Its bright inhabitants to welcome her
With revelry and pageant. What lies here
(Pointing to the couch)
Is but the rich robe worn one passing hour

ACT IV. SCENE I

At tedious ceremony, then cast aside
As no more needed.

CLITUS. (*At the couch.*) Can the years unborn
Hold any marked or memorable grief
For men to suffer? When this tide of tears
Hath spent its ruinous force, and drawn again
Back to the general deep, whose monody
Is heard about the shores of human life
For ever and for ever, shall there come
One heaving billow from that sighing store
And sobbing chamber of calamity
To touch our height of sorrow?

PROB. Yet there lives
Even in that thought some comfort.

CLITUS. I must fare
Like an unthrifty messenger betrayed
By too much zeal, who, stumbling in rude haste
Into some august presence, feels rebuke
Even in its calm, and stammering out abashed
A maimed and garbled story, gets him forth,
Leaving the pith unworded.

LONG. Say not so.
I am Zenobia's factor, left in charge
To satisfy a clamorous creditor
And hasten after. I'll deliver her
Dione's message: if the radiant soul,
Freed like a bird from its captivity
And fledged for flight untired, at all revert
To little injuries of the prison-house,
The unkindness, keenly felt and mutely borne,
Of scanty seed, or water-drops forgot,
Or twittering cheep denied, that made it droop—
Be sure this word will gladden her.

ACT IV. SCENE I

CLITUS. There you touch
New sorrow ! Cassius, when your steps were bent
To Athens' calm of whispering colonnades,
'Twas I that bade you stay : would first this tongue
Had withered at the roots !

LONG. Wish no such wrong !
My days had hardly bettered the blind mole's,
Driving content his toilsome burrowings,
To whose dull sense the burning of the stars,
The wild sea's passion and the gorgeous wear
Of field and forest, are naught. Now have I stood
Upon a skyey pinnacle, beset
With all earth's,giant rumour, while mine eyes
Drank the unclouded miracle of light,
As wrought for only me. Dost thou recall
Our talk of marriage once ? I have found a bride
I never dreamed of ! my felicity
Is of an endless consequence, and dares
A date with heaven itself.

CLITUS. And is this truth ?
Then has God given thy soul an amulet
Sovereign indeed, that makes the axe thy friend
And marshal unto happiness.

PROB. (*Advancing.*) My lord,
'Tis my ungrateful office and strict charge
That bids me hasten you.

LONG. I am ready, sir.
Most welcome is the summons ; for this world
Is grown a blurring mist, and earthly sound
Estranged to idle buzzing in these ears
That catch the immortal accent. I am one
Embarking, 'neath the North's bleak frown, for lands
Of flowery pomp and fadeless summertime.

ACT IV. SCENE II

The wind blows fair ; the deep's loud voices call !
The canvas draws aloft ; and the heeled craft,
Dipped to the gunnel 'neath the bellying sail,
Strains at the cable : cut it when you will !

PROB. (*Clasping his hand.*) Oh, happy confidence !
when I set sail,
My bark be manned with spirits of like emprise,
Confess the freightage of as rich a hope,
And win such port as thine !

LONG. Let us go forth.

(*Exeunt R., LONGINUS leading.*)

THE SCENE CLOSES.

SCENE II.—*The great square, thronged with soldiers and citizens. Sunset. In the centre appears a scaffold draped in black, and surrounded by Guards drawn up: upon it the headsman, in black, standing near the block. Facing it, on the right, AURELIAN, seated in a chair of state. Enter, L., LONGINUS, escorted by PROBUS and soldiers. At the foot of the scaffold the soldiers halt, and LONGINUS ascends alone, while PROBUS passes round and whispers AURELIAN. With a passionate gesture the EMPEROR starts from his seat ; and, disregarding PROBUS' deprecatory movement, seems with uplifted arm to threaten LONGINUS. As the latter reaches the top of the scaffold the setting sun bursts from behind the clouds and illuminates his features: at the same moment break forth the voices of the Priests of the Sun, chanting the Evening Hymn. With a movement of despair AURELIAN sinks back in his chair, and buries his face in his robe. During the singing of the Hymn, LONGINUS*

ACT IV. SCENE II

*stands motionless, gazing into the sunset: and towards
the close of the second verse the CURTAIN falls.*

(*The PRIESTS, singing, R.*)

EVENING HYMN

Chief! about whose sinking fire
Cloud-battalions conspire,
Victor Light! who, threatened thus,
Shinest still more glorious;
Tinge our journey at its close
With a tender evening rose;
Life's brief sunbeam overcast
Gather to Thy Flame at last.

Swift o'er all the human tale
Darkness draws her destined veil:
Fails the age-attested scheme;
Flags the effort, dies the dream.
Only Thou art changeless! Man,
Finishing his futile span
On the threshold of the night,
Bows his head, expects Thy light.

NOTES TO 'ZENOBIA'

Note 1. Act I., p. 13. 'The buried world whose dust your coming stirred': "On ne sçait ni le tems, ni l'occasion qui amena ce sçavant à la Cour de Palmyre. Mais ce qui est avoué de tous les connoisseurs, c'est que Denys Longin fut en son genre un des plus grands hommes du troisième siècle. Quelques-uns l'ont cru natif d'Emèse en Syrie : du moins assure-t-on que Frontonide sa mère étoit Emésienne, et sœur d'un petit-fils de Plutarque nommé Fronton, qui fit Longin héritier de tous ses biens."—*Histoire de Zenobie*, par Euvoï de Hauteville (La Haye, 1758), p. 180.

Note 2. Act I., p. 21. 'Decks her son in the purple': Trebellius Pollio mentions two sons of Zenobia by Odenathus, namely Herennianus and Timolaus, 'quorum nomine Zenobia, usurpato sibi imperio diutius quam feminam decuit, rem publicam obtinuit, parvulos Romani imperatoris habitu præferens purpuratos eosdemque adhibens contionibus, quas illa viriliter frequentavit, Didonem et Samiramidem et Cleopatram sui generis principem inter cetera prædicans.' *Triginta Tyranni*, c. 27. Vopiscus, however, correcting this statement (*Aurel.* c. 38), says that it was not in the name of Herennianus and Timolaus, but of Vabalathus, that she exercised authority; and his claim finds a support, which that of the others lacks, in the survival of a few medals, both Greek and Roman, bearing his name and effigy, with Aurelian's on the reverse. The rank conferred on him, whether by Zenobia or Aurelian, must have been that of 'Cæsar,' a title employed from the time of Hadrian onwards to designate the heir-apparent, already associated to the imperial power. In Act IV. I have, however, once or twice applied to Aurelian a style properly applicable only to earlier emperors.

Note 3. Act I., p. 22. 'Makes not Sapor even now His footstool of a captive emperor': the indignities offered to the imperial captive are reproduced from Tillemont by Gibbon, who says that when Sapor wished to mount his horse, he placed his foot upon Valerian's neck. I

NOTES

cannot find the precise authority for this, though several speak of servile treatment. The Elizabethan reader will recall the similar usage of the captive Bajazet by the 'glorious tyrant' Tamburlaine (1st Part, iv. 2). It should be noted, however, that Valerian's sufferings terminated long before the date at which the play opens. Against the 'captus in dedecori seruitute consenuit' of Rufus Sextus, c. 23, we may put Aurelius Victor 'De Cæsaribus,' c. xxxii., 'interiit imperii anno sexto,' i.e. in 260, the year of his defeat and capture. He was then more than seventy years of age.

Note 4. Act I., p. 24. 'Whose fame . . . Longinus': Eunapius, in his life of Porphyry, Longinus' pupil, extols our hero as 'a kind of living library and walking museum,' without whose assent no critical opinion could be held valid. Ἦν γὰρ ὁ Δογγίνος μακρῷ τῶν τότε ἀνδρῶν τὰ πάντα ἀριστος, καὶ τῶν βιβλίων τε αὐτοῦ πολὺ πλῆθος φέρεται, καὶ τὸ φερόμενον θαυμάζεται. Καὶ ἐὰν τις κατέγνω τινὸς τῶν παλαιῶν, οὐ τὸ δοξασθὲν ἐκράτει πρότερον, ἀλλ' ἡ Δογγίνου πάντως ἐκράτει κρίσις.

Note 5. Act I., p. 29. 'Phronto of Athens': see Note 1. Actually Phronto must have died some years prior to the date at which the play begins, 272 A.D. The Gothic attack on Athens really occurred ten years before (262 A.D.), in the reign of Gallienus: see Gibbon, vol. i. 399 (ch. x.). The story about the books occurs in Zonaras, xii. 26, p. 605, and is briefly given at the end of Montaigne's essay on Pedantry.

Note 6. Act I., p. 32. 'A seditious bishop Paul,' etc.: see Zonaras, xii. 25, p. 603, and Robertson's *History of the Church*, ch. vii. The critic will, I hope, forgive my retention of Paul of Samosata, a figure who appears no more, and is unessential to my plot, though he was one of Aurelian's sources of trouble in Syria. Neale's *History of the Eastern Church* says that he had been chosen, as the highest dignitary in the East, to satisfy Zenobia's desire for instruction in the principles of the Christian faith. According to Athanasius, nearly her contemporary, she was inclined to Judaism; and she has even been said (with scant probability) to have been a Jewess. See the recent work of Dr. William Wright, *Palmyra and Zenobia*, pp. 124, 131.

Note 7. Act II., p. 37. 'Aphaca': a place between Heliopolis and Biblus, with a lake and temple sacred to Aphrodite. Zosimus, i. 58, says the Palmyrenes might have taken warning from the fact that the gold and silver vessels and woven raiment which they were wont to cast yearly into the lake in the goddess' honour, failed this year to sink, as though she rejected their offering.

NOTES

Note 8. Act II., p. 40. 'Aurelian's taste for intrigue . . . Milan': see Zonaras, xii. c. 25, pp. 601-2.

Note 9. Act II., p. 43. 'A merry soul that loves a wench,' etc.: "convivium de assaturis (roast meat) maxime fuit: vino russo maxime delectatus est. . . . Erat quidem rarus in voluptatibus, sed miro modo mimis delectabatur, vehementissime autem delectatus est Fagone," a story of whose gluttony is then related.

Note 10. Act II., p. 43. 'That gamesome legionary he crucified,' etc.: this instance of Aurelian's severity is recorded by Vopiscus, c. 7. "Hic autem, ut supra diximus, militibus ita timori fuit, ut sub eo, posteaquam semel cum ingenti severitate castrensia peccata correxerat, nemo peccaverit. Solus denique omnium militem, qui adulterium cum hospitis uxore commiserat, ita punivit, ut duarum arborum capita inflecteret, ad pedes militis deligaret easdemque subito dimitteret, ut scissus ille utrimque penderet: quæ res ingentem timorem omnibus fecit."

Note 11. Act II., p. 43. 'The Jews . . . after the late revolt': the disturbance here alluded to, and connected with the fortunes of Zacchæus (Act III., p. 80), was that which took its rise from a corruption of the coinage by the workmen of the mint. "Neque secus intra Urbem monetæ opifices deleti; qui cum auctore Felicissimo rationali (supervisor) nummariam notam corrosissent, poenæ metu bellum fecerant, usque eo grave, uti per Coelum montem congressi septem fere millia bellatorum confecerint." Aurelius Victor, c. 35. 6. But from Vopiscus' mention (c. 21) of the execution of some senators, it seems as if senatorial intrigue lay behind. Aurelian was not on good terms with the order. Gibbon relates the affair as occurring after the war with Zenobia; but Vopiscus places it before.

Note 12. Act II., p. 43. 'Hand-to-Sword': Vopiscus (c. 6) says that Aurelian received this nickname in the army, when tribune, to distinguish him from a namesake.

Note 13. Act II., p. 50. 'Cniva led the Goths southwards': the Gothic invasion under Cniva, 250 A.D., is related by Jornandes, c. 18, and Aurelius Victor, c. 29. They besieged and sacked Philippopolis, and twice defeated the emperor Decius. See Gibbon, vol. i. 382-6 (ch. x.).

Note 14. Act II., p. 57. 'Probus . . . Egypt': Zosimus, i. 44, relates that Probus recovered Egypt after Zabdas' conquest of it in Claudius' time, only to be subsequently worsted by Timagenes, an Egyptian champion of Zenobia, and to commit suicide. Zonaras, xii. 27, p. 607, says that Zenobia on her conquest of Egypt 'had captured

NOTES

Probus, who was commander there': while Vopiscus, in his life of Probus, c. 9, says, "Pugnavit etiam contra Palmyrenos Odenati et Cleopatæ [Zenobiæ ?] partibus Ægyptum defendentes, primo feliciter, postea temere, ut poene caperetur, sed postea reffectis viribus Ægyptum et orientis maximam partem in Aureliani potestatem redegit." I have chosen to follow Gibbon in representing these Egyptian events as part of Aurelian's campaign against Zenobia. The hint of Probus' danger given above forms my sole warrant for the Alexandrian schemes with which I have credited Seleucus. Probus succeeded to the empire in 276 A.D., and kept his high character unstained through six years of sovereign power. It is interesting to note that, like Aurelian, he was a native of Sirmium in Pannonia.

Note 15. Act II., p. 69. "Zenobia . . . to Aurelian": historically Zenobia's letter of defiance, dictated by Longinus, was written during the siege, in answer to Aurelian's demand for surrender. It is preserved by Vopiscus (*Aurel.* c. 27) from the documents to which he had access in the Ulpian library, being translated by him from the original Greek, and runs as follows: "Zenobia regina orientis Aureliano Augusto. Nemo adhuc præter te hoc, quod poscis, litteris petit. Virtute faciendum est quicquid in rebus bellicis est gerendum. Deditionem meam petis, quasi nescias Cleopatram reginam perire maluisse quam in qualibet vivere dignitate. Nobis Persarum auxilia non desunt, quæ jam speramus, pro nobis sunt Saraceni, pro nobis Armenii. Latrones Syri exercitum tuum, Aureliane, vicerunt. Quid igitur si illa venerit manus, quæ undique speratur? Pones profecto supercilium, quo nunc mihi deditionem, quasi omnifariam victor, imperas." The responsibility for this letter was the cause of Longinus' execution (*Vop. Aurel.* 30. 3).

Note 16. Act III., p. 78. 'A secret way': there is no historical authority for this secret passage, Zenobia's escape having been actually made through the Roman lines. The expedient is suggested in Ware's *Letters from Palmyra* (p. 304, Cassell's edition), but formed, I believe, part of my plot before I had reached that portion of the novel, which, however, I have followed in making a Jew the repository and the revealer of the secret.

Note 17. Act III., p. 87. 'Discharge my letter into camp': Aurelius Victor (*De Caesaribus*, 33. 20) relates how Aureolus, besieged in Milan, and wishing to convey some false information to the besiegers, 'litteras e muro quam occultissime potuit abiecit; quæ forte memoratis repertæ, metum suspicionemque injecere,' etc.

Note 18. Act III., p. 93. 'Corsote': Dr. William Wright (*Pal-*

NOTES

myra and Zenobia, p. 160) says: 'Deyr is believed to be the crossing at which Zenobia was captured.' But Deyr or Beonan lies some 150 miles to the N.E. of Palmyra; and if Ctesiphon to the S.E. was her objective, it seems hardly probable she would take so roundabout a route. I have chosen Corsote, the nearest point (about 160 miles) on the river due E. from Palmyra, as best satisfying her double need, of speedy safety and speedy arrival at the Persian capital; though doubtless the journey to Corsote and back is rather more than could actually be accomplished by the most rapid travelling in the forty hours or so that I have allotted for it.

Note 19. Act IV., p. 102. 'But traitress—no!': the statement that Zenobia endeavoured to shift the responsibility for her actions upon Longinus rests on the authority of Zosimus, i. 56, p. 49: ἐπαελθὼν εἰς τὴν Ἑμεσαν εἰς κρίσιν ἤγαγε Ζηνοβίαν τε καὶ τοὺς ταύτῃ συναραμένους. ἐπεὶ δὲ αἰτίας ἔλεγεν αὐτὴν ἐξαιρούσα, πολλοὺς τε ἄλλους ἤγεν εἰς μέσον ὡς παραγαγόντας ὅλα γυναῖκα, ἐν οἷς καὶ Λογγίνος ἦν, οὗ συγγράμματα ἔστι μέγα τοῖς παιδείας μεταποιουμένοις ὄφελος φέροντα· ὥπερ ἐφ' οἷς κατηγορεῖτο ἐλεγχομένῳ παραχρήμα ὁ βασιλεὺς θανάτου ζημίαν ἐπέθηκεν, ἣν οὕτω γενναίως ἤνεγκεν ὁ Λογγίνος ὥστε καὶ τοὺς σχετλιάζοντας ἐπὶ τῷ πάθει παραμυθεῖσθαι, καὶ ἄλλων δὲ Ζηνοβίας κατειπούσης κολάσεσιν ὑπαχθέντων. It is in this point, and in regard to her end, that I have diverged most seriously from history. Zosimus, c. 59, mentions a report that she died of illness or starved herself before they quitted Asia, and that the other chief captives, except her son, drowned themselves as they were crossing the Hellespont. Zonaras, too, xii. 27 (p. 607), states that while some say she was taken to Rome and married there, others represent her as dying on the journey through excessive grief at her reverse of fortune. But there is no escaping the decisive testimony of Trebellius Pollio, c. 30, and Vopiscus, c. 33, who describe at length Aurelian's triumph in Rome and her part therein; while the former speaks of her subsequent quiet life at Tibur, not far from Hadrian's villa.

Note 20. Act IV., p. 105. 'Ribald bards who spill their venom,' etc.: Trebellius Pollio (*Triginta Tyranni*, c. 30) relates how Aurelian met the sneers against him by a letter to the Senate and people, representing how formidable a foe Zenobia was. "Sibi ergo habere propriarum venena linguarum ii quibus nihil placet." § 9.

Note 21. Act IV., p. 107. 'The doom even now o'erhanging thee': Aurelian was assassinated about a year and a half later (March, 275 A.D.), between Heraclea and Byzantium, while setting out on his campaign against Persia. I give the event in Gibbon's words (vol. ii.

NOTES

p. 32, chap. xi.): "He there experienced that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries [Eros by name, according to Zonaras and Zosimus, Mnesteus according to Vopiscus], who was accused of extortion, and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them, in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person, and, after a short resistance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and trusted. He died regretted by the army, detested by the senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state."

Note 22. Act IV, p. III. (Seleucus . . . driven out): I have transferred to Palmyra and Seleucus the circumstances attending Aurelian's capture of Tyana in Ancyra, which was betrayed to him by one of its citizens earlier in the war. In a letter given by Vopiscus (*Aur.* 23. 4) the emperor thus defends his abandonment of Heraclammon, the traitor, to the soldiery: "Occidi passus sum cujus quasi beneficio Thyanam recepi. Ego vero proditorem amare non potui et libenter tuli, quod eum milites occiderunt, neque enim mihi fidem servare potuisset, qui patriæ non pepercit."

Opinions of the Press

THE IMMORTALS AND OTHER POEMS

BY R. WARWICK BOND

"The name of Mr. R. Warwick Bond will perhaps be new to most readers of poetry, as it is to ourselves. But if he can maintain the level of melodious versification and graceful fancy which he has reached in 'The Immortals and other Poems,' it should not long continue to be unknown. 'The Immortals' is a vision of the great poets of the world, who hold high debate on man and his destiny, each reflecting in his turn the spirit of the times to which he belonged. The conception is a bold one, but Mr. Bond grapples with it boldly and not unsuccessfully, and handles the difficult metre he has borrowed from Cardinal Newman with grace and skill."—*Times*, Jan. 1st, 1891.

"Mr. Bond shows dignity of style and reverence of spirit in making his Immortals speak. . . . The poem, as a whole, is lofty in tone and elegant in diction. Of the minor verses, 'Sunset' is perhaps the best, but all are above mediocrity."—*Morning Post*, Jan. 2nd, 1891.

"The task was a hard one, but he has accomplished it with a large measure of success, due partly to skill, partly to discretion. His mind is clear, his power of expression vigorous and true, and by a rigid application of the closure he saves his characters from any danger of dullness. Homer's speech lends itself most easily to the needs of quotation.—

* * * *

Feebly and slow
Trickles Life's current in an hundred streams,
That once, downrushing from the mountain's brow,
Leapt in the morning's beams
Joyous, resistless! Earth is wide as then,
And Nature not less fair: what plague has fallen on men?

The last stanza is exceedingly fine, and so is his picture of the great Puritan poet."—*Literary World*, March 20th, 1891.

"The poems therein contained show no sign of immaturity, and, if the poet be in reality a young singer, he has in these verses already reached no mean height of poetic attainment, and given most hopeful promise of future success. . . . (The metre) is well suited to the elevated diction and grave thoughtfulness of Mr. Bond's poem. . . . There are but ten sonnets, and amongst them not one which the most fanatic sonnet-maniac would wish away. That on Robert Browning is fine, and this, on the unveiling of the Gordon Statue in Trafalgar Square, except for the awkward penultimate line of the sextet, could hardly be improved.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

We raised no cheer—we stood a silent throng,
And watched the veiling drapery fall aside,
And viewed his breathing image with a pride
That struggled with the shame of conscious wrong,
As over each man's heart, that crowd among,
Swept the remembrance of yon bitter tide
When England gathered how her hero died
Deserted, hopeless—but unshaken, strong !

We cannot make amends : we can but weep
The cold insensibility that lost
A worth the world too seldom paragon ;
And shame our sordid lives, that halt and creep
And boggle o'er each Heaven-sent impulse' cost,
By his, whose memory shall outlive the bronze."

—*Manchester Examiner*, Oct. 10th, 1890.

"There is genuine poetic feeling in this dainty little volume, and the author has considerable facility in metres."—*British Weekly*, Oct. 2nd, 1890.

"Mr. Bond has the feelings and the fancy of a poet."—*Publishers' Circular*, Oct 15th, 1890.

"A dainty little volume of elegant verse."—*Inquirer*, Oct. 25th, 1890.

"The effort of Mr. Bond . . . is hardly less interesting than daring."—*Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 25th, 1890.

"There is both dignity and sweetness in Mr. Bond's work."—*Graphic*, Nov. 22nd, 1890.

"His verses are singularly graceful and well turned."—*Guardian*, Dec. 31st, 1890.

"In his minor pieces, such as 'The Fall of the Leaf' and 'Bettwy-Coed,' we like him very much."—*Speaker*, Dec. 20th, 1890.

"These poems have the note of culture and refinement."—*Birmingham Post*, Jan. 14th, 1891.

"Mr. Bond evidently aims at the audience fit though few."—*Public Opinion*, Feb. 13th, 1891.

"All the excellences of this charming little volume are not contained in its parchment cover. . . . As a sample of his wares, we may take the sonnet addressed to the crews of the Southport and St. Anne's lifeboats, who perished in the gallant attempt to rescue a crew in December, 1886.

Our tears would wrong you, hero-spirits ! who cast
Your lives into the ungoverned wild debate
Of wind and wave, and, whelmed beneath the weight
Of breakers roaring landwards on the blast,
From the mid hurricane to silence passed.
Tears for the world made poorer by your fate !
Tears for the wife and children desolate !
For you, great hearts ! no idle grief we waste :
Seeing, to brave men, Death is as a bride
Won by long wooing, in whose arms they sleep

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

And know no care—or harbour shut from harm,
Where the loud voices of the wintry storm
Come not, but sea-worn barks securely ride,
Locked in a spacious haven, still and deep."

—*Yorkshire Post*, Jan. 14th, 1891.

"A volume of poetry as contradistinguished from verse. A book to put in one's pocket on leaving home for a holiday tramp. . . . Of the shorter poems 'The Fall of the Leaf' and 'Sunset' are very fine."—*Sheffield Independent*, April 9th, 1891.

"In his 'Immortals and other Poems' Mr. R. Warwick Bond successfully breaks ground as a poet. . . . His diction and imagery are occasionally felicitous—as, for example, in this tribute to the magic of Virgil:—

But when he spoke
—Oh! not with this rude utterance!—an unknown
And peerless harmony the silence broke,
Whose sweetness might disown
The far-off cadence of the summer seas
That chant at eve a burthen fraught with memories.

Again, at Shakespeare's uprising with intent to express his broad and sympathetic views of human conduct and interest, there was a thrill of spontaneous enthusiasm:—

And far in heaven, methought a delicate rose
Flushed o'er the listening heights, and thrilled their conscious snows.
. . . The poem is good, both in conception and execution, and its promise is perhaps of more import than its performance. . . . His 'Sunset' displays both descriptive beauty and metrical grace."—*Daily Chronicle*, Feb. 18th, 1891.

AN ODE TO THE SUN, AND OTHER POEMS

BY R. WARWICK BOND

"Mr. R. Warwick Bond, whose poem 'The Immortals' met with a very favourable reception two years ago, has made another venture. . . . There is much in Mr. Bond's volume that will please a good reader. . . . Here are verses which will show in what manner the wonderful theme has kindled in him corresponding fires:—

What wonder if the chainless soul of Greece
To thee her manifold libation spills?
—Lord of her olive's, of her vine's, increase!
Unerring Archer! roving Lycian hills;
Fathomless Seer! whose inspiration fills
Thy priestess with the rage of hidden things;
Or Harpist! wreathed with the unwithering bays!
—Greece, whose warm page, whose whole existence, rings
With still redoubled pæans in thy praise,

The theme alike and source of those her deathless lays!

In 'The Stowaway,' which describes an incident that occurred in the great storm of October, 1882, Mr. Bond gives us an admirable bit of

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

verse. . . . it would make an excellent recitation."—*Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 20th, 1892.

"Mr. Bond in his present volume fully maintains the promise we discerned in his work. . . . His versification is still as melodious and his fancy as graceful as before."—*Times*, March 30th, 1893.

"Mr. Bond has improved, . . . his poems show more feeling and increased power. . . . A minor key suits him best."—*Guardian*, March 15th, 1893.

"The author of 'The Immortals' . . . gives further proof in this volume of his undoubted felicity of expression and genuine feeling . . . 'A Christmas Eve' is a charming composition in ballad form. . . . His sympathy with classical studies is eloquently expressed in 'Væ Victis.'"—*Church Times*, Nov. 11th, 1892.

"The measure and tread of the piece which gives title to the collection are firm and stately rather than flowing, requiring slow perusal to thoroughly grasp the thought and catch the idea; but amid the elaborate lines there are those which have the freshness, smoothness, and beauty of spontaneity and inspiration, as

—Where no mind

Is pasture to remorse, where hate ne'er came,

Where trust begets no tears, and loveliness no shame.

The other pieces are cast in various moods and measures. The breezy lilt and the pathetic strain alternate in 'The Stowaway'; humour lurks but does not obtrude in 'Cinderella at Home'; there is music in the plaint of 'An Old Air' and 'Out of Tune,' and not a few beauties of diction and of fancy to be found in the remainder of a collection that reaches a high level of culture and melodious excellence."—*Liverpool Daily Post*, November 30th, 1892.

"The work of a scholarly, cultured mind that takes delight in poetry, in nature, and in art."—*Scotsman*, March 20th, 1893.

"Shows himself capable of emotion and pathos."—*Publishers' Circular*, March 25th, 1893.

"He writes gracefully and well. He can put a touching story into very effective verse, as 'The Stowaway' shows."—*Yorkshire Post*, March 29th, 1893.

"Of all the 'poems' in *An Ode to the Sun* we fancy but one, 'An Old Air,' wherein the curious may discover a pretty lyric."—*National Observer*, January 21st, 1893.

"These poems are well worth reading . . . 'Astræa Redux' is ambitious and successful; 'My Host' is sarcastically clever; even the sonnet upon the death of Prince Albert Victor, which we have begun to look upon as inevitable from minor poets, has an undeniable charm and a true sympathetic ring about it."—*Public Opinion*, March 31st, 1893.

"The thought and point of view of 'Limitation' has distinct interest."—*Bookman*, April, 1893.

"New sonnetteers are so often passed by without remark, that we feel it incumbent on us to call attention to the quality of Mr. Bond's verses."—*Bookseller*, April 7th, 1893.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

"Mr. Bond is a deep student, and there is a majesty of diction in most of these poems, which is in a high degree noteworthy. He has sat long at the feet of Milton, and somewhat at those of Wordsworth, and that purest singer of our time, Matthew Arnold, and no wonder that he has caught more than an echo of their grandeur. Here, for example, are the second and third stanzas of his opening poem:—

Even as hoar Ossian's Celtic harp did hail
Thy lamp, that o'er his sightless eyeballs rolled—
Even as that other broke the stately tale,
Where Hell and hideous Chaos lay encrolled,
To bless that Light he should no more behold—
I too, last-born of all the hapless choir,
No peer of these who hymned thee heretofore,
Yet one for whom God darkens not thy fire,
Salute thee, ere I reach the silent door,
And pass like them to dust, and be a voice no more.

Hail! thou that never without welcome art,
Bright Lord of human joy!—whether new-born,
And shaking Ocean from thee, to the heart
Of the dim city's slaves, by toil outworn,
Thou bring'st a thought that makes them less forlorn,
And lightenest the sad features, pale and wan;
—Or when the red hues of thy setting stain
Evening's cloud-hung pavilions, and man
Hears in that vision's solemn peace a strain
Wafted from Heaven itself, that stills Earth's clamorous pain.

Much of Mr. Bond's work may be classed as rhetorical: but, as will be seen from the above, there is plenty of lofty thought in it. Slight faults . . . there are here and there; but as a whole the lines are melodious and free-flowing. 'The Stowaway' is a noble story told in noble language, and the rhetorical tendency, though always present, does not detract from the simplicity and pathos, which were the writer's aim. In 'Astræa Redux' and 'Væ Victis' . . . there is much that is classical in the truest sense; and 'A Ruminant'—the reverie of a student diverted from the perusal of old Sir Thomas Browne, by a mental glance at Milton's

Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade—

will bring before most readers a remembrance of the effort demanded in successful pursuit of any sort. . . . Perhaps Mr. Bond at times errs in the direction of building for himself a palace of art. The lowlands, where shepherds pipe, are more constantly attractive to most people, and they are not wanting in nobleness and poetry."—*Manchester Courier*, April 1st, 1893.

"Shows his accustomed merits of sweetness and dignity of versification."—*Westminster Review*, June, 1893.

"We know Mr. Bond to be a scholar and a lover of the old poets from his recent edition of William Basse. . . . These three verses

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

of parted love in Mr. Bond's most ambitious poem, 'An Epithalamium,' in the Elizabethan fashion, make most impression on us :—

Is there no sense
Whereby two souls conjunct in sympathy
May mingle, o'er the roaring waste of sea,
In conference?
Breathe no celestial airs that grace may lend
Our grosser limitation to suspend
And bid us bridge the vast unmeasured space
With love's embrace?
Gleams there no glass in heaven's o'erarching blue
Where thought may follow thought and understand,
As when from eye to eye the message flew,
And hand pressed hand ?'

All his verse has thought, and he has a certain skill in the manipulation of intricate metres."—*Daily Chronicle*, June 3rd, 1893.

"We can say, and that with no uncertain tone, that it has been a true pleasure to us to peruse many of these poems. . . . The ode addressed to the sun has some fine stanzas, and we should like to quote one or two of them, but turning over the pages we find verses of sweeter and simpler appeal. ['My Host' quoted] This is capital. . . . Often Mr. Bond gives us statelier work. The first three verses of 'Polyhymnia' are beautiful, and there is much to be admired in the 'Stowaway' ballad, though once Longfellow is too closely imitated. We shall end by cordially hoping that more copies of this second book will escape from the publishers' shelves into the reading world than there did of the first."—*Literary World*, June 9th, 1893.

"Mr. Bond is considerably above the level of average merit. 'Væ Victis! a lament over the threatened decay of Classical Studies,' is really fine. There is something in the following which Matthew Arnold himself would not have disdained :—

Ah! long ago
That glory sank beyond the western steep :
Fast comes the night! but yet some after-glow
The lonely uplands keep ;
A roseate flush still lingers in the skies,
And echoes faint are heard of vanished harmonies.
We watch it fade,
That heavenly light! we hear those voices die!
Mutely we sit, with folded hands, betrayed
To idle phantasy :
We hear but discord in the world's new song ;
We cannot share its feast, nor join its hurrying throng :
Like an old hound
That patient waits in his dead master's hall
And strains his ear for the loved footstep's sound,
The old familiar call ;
And brooding o'er a dear face unforgot,
Turns from the strange caress, the hand that comforts not.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

The 'Epithalamium,' that with its 'Epilogue' concludes this volume, is another fine effort."—*Spectator*, October 28th, 1893.

AT STRATFORD FESTIVAL: A POEM

BY R. WARWICK BOND

"Mr. R. Warwick Bond has unmistakable poetical gifts, and this short poem is distinguished by a vein of pleasant reflection as well as by felicity of language."—*Times*, April 16th, 1896.

"It is a worthy attempt to pluck out the heart of Shakespeare's mystery. He fails, of course, like many of his brothers, but he succeeds very well indeed in showing how potently he has been touched to a variety of fine poetic issues."—*Glasgow Herald*, April 16th, 1896.

"A dignified and sonorous poem."—*National Observer*, April 18th, 1896.

"It is a fine piece of Shakespearean admiration, dignified in style, sweet and musical in its handling of verse, and healthy and inspiring in thought. Every lover of Shakespeare will desire to possess it in its present attractive shape, and will read it with all the more sympathy after looking at the picture of Stratford Church which graces it as a frontispiece."—*Scotsman*, April 20th, 1896.

"A very tastefully printed edition of Mr. R. Warwick Bond's tribute to Shakespeare has been published. The poem originally appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine*, but some new stanzas of equal merit and beauty have since been added."—*Literary World*, October 2nd, 1896.

"A graceful tribute to the national poet. . . . Mr. Bond writes with cultured ease and a warm appreciation of the merits of his subject."—*Liverpool Post*, February 20th, 1897.

"*At Stratford Festival* . . . is that rare thing, a versified tribute to Shakspeare, of which his countrymen need not be ashamed. . . . All lovers of Shakspeare, and of graceful verse and of dignified thought, will be glad to have this further contribution to the praise of the dramatist, and to learn that

'Neath Arden boughs the breeze blows kindly yet."

—*Manchester Courier*, May 20th, 1896.

ANOTHER SHEAF

(Reprinting *At Stratford Festival*.)

BY R. WARWICK BOND.

"The poem is . . . likely to take permanent place in the mass of verse called forth by the name of Shakespeare . . . a carefully-wrought poetic effort, and contains many felicities of thought and phrase. The same is true of the other poem called 'The Ordered House (a Monologue after Philippi)' . . .

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

And all those flowers we cherished here on earth,
Shall they not there in full luxuriance bloom?
Set in God's nursery shall not each give birth
To rarer growth than in this narrow room?
If struggling forth 'mid earth's surrounding gloom
They won the praise of fragrant or of fair,
What exquisite ineffable perfume
Shall they exhale in Heaven's pellucid air,

What dower of deathless grace, what soul of grandeur, there! . . .

But still more striking are the following lines, addressed to the Spirit of Good :—

Hast Thou not oft from some disastrous hour
Plucked such an issue as redeemed the field?
Canst Thou not fashion from defeat a power
That mocks the victory of spear and shield?
If to our rude assault shall never yield
The fortress of Thine unascended sky,
In sorrow shall the conquest be revealed,
In sacrifice the race their bliss descry,
And catch through mist of tears the blaze of Deity?

—*Glasgow Herald*, Mar. 17th, 1898.

"A monologue 'after Philippi' . . . has the classical stateliness of form characteristic of all this author's work. . . . In all of them the writer proves himself a follower of the older orthodoxy in English poetry, and not one to go after modern fashions of decadence, or follow the French in producing pretty virtuosités. . . . His book . . . cannot but be read with sympathy by those who concern themselves to see the regular tradition of classical English poetry handed on."—*Scotsman*, March 17th, 1898.

" . . . He has . . . flowing and sinuous metres, harmony and distinction of utterance, gravity, and pensiveness of thought, sometimes a very sharp pathos. . . .

Strength came at last my darling lure to fly :
I could not speak, but wrote 'We meet no more !'
And she long since knows happiness, and I
Knew weariness before.

That last touch searches. It is from 'A Foolish Calendar,' perhaps the best poem in the book.—*Newcastle Chronicle*, March 23rd, 1898.

"The score of admirably written pages which stand as an introduction to *Another Sheaf*, are packed with acute criticism and wise comment upon some of the conditions which at present govern the production of poetry . . . his own achievement is an excellent illustration of the methods he would extol. He is in the classical tradition, and has caught much of its stately manner and dignified felicities. His verse is intellectualised, yet his elaborate stanzas have nothing rugged about them ; they unroll a serene and melodious length. In . . . 'At Stratford Festival' there is fine thought, fine feeling, and fine music ; we have read it with pleasure, and shall do so again. Here are two stanzas on Shakespeare's return to Stratford Puritanism :—

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

He, too, confessed the auroral sympathies :
 Afar through mist of triumph and of tears
 He caught their paradisaal gleam, and saved
 A quiet remnant from his strenuous years :
 To Nature, wife and child returning braved
 The petty calumnies,
 The peevish scorns, the looks precise, that freeze
 A wandering heart come back to wonted ways.
 But witlessly ye raise
 Dear fools ! your eyebrow of contempt ; for these
 Do but enlarge their empire by your ban !
 Think of these stormy spirits as reeds of choice
 Plucked by a fictive Deity that wrought
 Tumultuous pipes for His great organ-voice,
 Teasing life's every fibre to the thought.
 Ye, whose mechanic plan
 Would mend the bungling of this Artisan,
 Con these last leaves ; and, as bleared eyes discern
 The all-conquering sunshine, learn
 The poet yet may purify the man. . . .

There is some fine austere writing in 'The Ordered House.' . . .
 Mr. Bond handles (the metre) with skill and distinction. This stanza,
 for instance, has its authentic dignity, and there are many as good :—

Hast Thou not oft, etc.

And finally, these beautiful lines were written as a 'Swan Song' for
 Webster's noble and intimate tragedy, 'The Duchess of Malfi' :—

Pass gently, Life !
 As one that takes farewell of a dear friend :
 For ne'er till now were thou and I at strife,
 Nor shall the sequel lend
 The rich succession of thy smile and tear,
 The conquering pride of love that tramples fear
 And vaunts itself a rapture without end !
 But mine is weariness thou canst not mend.

Come, kindly Death !
 Unweave for tired hands the tangled plot.
 To thy forgetful palace entereth
 None to ask heriot,
 No hope and no regret—but ever, there,
 Passes the slumbrous waft of popped air
 O'er happy multitudes that have forgot :
 Angel ! I would be sleeping—tarry not ! . . .

. . . The strongest individual influence is probably that of Matthew
 Arnold, and for the perpetuation of the Arnoldian tradition in English
 poetry we must always confess gratitude."—*Academy*, April 9th, 1898.

" . . . Polished and delicate . . . afford very attractive
 reading . . . 'Swan Song,' 'A Child's Eyes,' and 'A Stratford
 Festival,' are more than pretty. His preface discusses with some

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

eloquence various points as to poetry and criticism."—*Morning Post*, April 14th, 1898.

"Mr. Warwick Bond is generally worth reading . . . and we hope that many people will read his ingenious and admirably written preface as well as his verses. . . . Many of the poems have a certain felicity of statement and a certain grace of finish which are not common even in these days when bards are many. . . . But the preface . . . contains a noteworthy plea against that mistake of the literary class, especially the younger members of it, which confuses dexterity and novelty of manner with the one thing needful—thought. . . . It is well that this view of the matter should be stated so clearly and competently just now, when the technical side of things is being advanced with contemptuous assurance by so many clever young critics in literature and art. . . . It is hardly necessary for anybody to apologise for not having written a poem on the Jubilee, but if we are to have an apology, let it be as graceful as Mr. Bond's, who would not write of the sixty years' reign while every one else was writing:—

Even as some girl
Witnesses honours showered on one she loves
Above her walk, and all day long
Combats her heart, while dame and noble throng
With gift and chaplet, thinking 'mid the whirl
Of pride and shame that her weak bosom moves,
'Silence is best':
But when the blare of trumpets and of drums
Is hushed, at nightfall comes
Weeping, and from her breast
Takes one poor wilding rose and lays it with the rest."

—*Times*, April 15th, 1898.

"There is melody in it, dignity of form often, a considered grace, a workman-like recasting of moods and moulds familiar to masters of English poetry."—*Weekly Sun*, April 17th, 1898.

"The preface is a piece of literature, not only in its form, but in its substance as philosophic criticism. It is a plea for the older poetry on which the writer has formed his style. . . . The author writes quite in the great manner, and has the air of poetic breeding, and the suggestion of habitual converse with great spirits. He sustains a great theme with dignity from first to last, as in the 'Stratford Festival.'"—*Daily News*, April 18th, 1898.

"He is a very scholarly and tuneful writer, with great skill in poetic numbers, and a considerable, if an ill-sustained, touch of poetic inspiration . . . his meaning is clear as crystal; and he does not need to disavow (as he does in his admirable little prefatory essay on poetry) 'the worship of sound and colour, or of merely metrical effects, to the wilful obscuration or exclusion of sense.' Mr. Bond's critical faculty is almost equal to his poetic."—*St. James' Budget*, April 22nd, 1898.

"When a poet writes twenty pages of preface to less than a score of short poems, he deserves the severest of treatment. Mr. Bond owns

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

the enormity and apologises. But an apology, we felt, could not wash out such offence, and we tackled the prose in grimmest mood—to find that it was an admirable and most timely essay. . . . ‘A Child’s Eyes’ and the ‘Swan Song’ . . . are evidence of a sensitive and gentle mind, with a skilled ear and a sweet voice in its service.”—*Bookman*, May, 1898.

“To meet with a volume of poetry worthy of perusal from cover to cover, is to the reviewer as an oasis in the desert . . . Those who are true poets are few and far between. To these choice spirits, however, Mr. Warwick Bond belongs, and we have read this latest volume from his pen with real pleasure. It is indeed a sheaf of golden grain. ‘At Stratford Festival’ is marked by power of thought and imagination, and is written in stately numbers. We quote the closing stanza :—

Well for the fame no envious years invade !
And well for us that o’er the centuries’ lapse.
One fair world blossoms, a perpetual spring,
Though here hope wither to a dim perhaps !
Well for our English hearts if, entering
Within yon sacred shade,
We mark, not all unmoved, where he is laid
Who as God’s steward bare the golden keys
That keep His treasures,
And passed to the great Audit unafraid !

Of the other poems we may specially mention ‘A Child’s Eyes,’ ‘The Ordered House,’ and on ‘A Pastoral Play.’”—*Hereford Times*, May 7th, 1898.

“ . . . A most ably written and thoughtful preface should not be passed over.” It contains some really valuable remarks on the prospects of poetry, on ‘the Célémène of public approbation,’ and on the serious appreciation of serious art, for which criticism not less than poetry may thank the author. . . . The present volume is indeed, throughout, good wine that needs no bush ; ripeness, dignity, conscientious strife with the eternal difficulties of expression, mark all Mr. Bond’s work. The two most considerable poems in this book . . . teem with good lines and strong imagery, and are excellently sustained. ‘A Foolish Calendar’ has a graceful and classic serenity . . . but rarer qualities are to be discerned in certain lyrical fragments and in some of the verses of ‘The Doubt,’ which perhaps show the high-water mark of his work in this volume.”—*Manchester Guardian*, May 13th, 1898.

“Excellent in conception and in execution, in fancy and in style.”—*Globe*, May 16th, 1898.

“ . . . Poems, exquisite alike in thought and diction. . . . The rare beauty of the verses contained in the present book will hardly be disputed by the most fastidious critic. Three of these may be specially mentioned, viz. : ‘At Stratford Festival,’ April 23rd, 1892 (one of the most poetic tributes to Shakespeare’s genius) ; ‘A Child’s Eyes’ (perhaps the best thing in the book), and ‘A Foolish Calendar,’

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

... while in the shorter ones Mr. Bond's marked poetic gifts are equally manifest."—*Liverpool Post*, June 1st, 1898.

"Certainly in Mr. Bond himself, as with his master, Matthew Arnold, the two functions of critic and poet are indissolubly combined . . .—this from the 'Monologue after Philippi,' where the final tragedy is given with a right restraint:—

"The breath Thou gavest, with these latest vows
Of one Thy servant ever, I return.—
Come, sword, thine office!" . . .

—Through the shadowy boughs
One quivering sigh, the last of life, was borne,
And silence fell. Until the night was worn
Nature at all her tired eyes sweetly slept;
Until the east remembered her of morn
The eternal lamps o'erhead their vigils kept,
As silent each along his changeless pathway swept.

In such passages as these Mr. Bond attains what he would delight to call the highest 'fetch' of his art. And, indeed, remembering still the narrow limits which he assigns to his work, never giving himself away in any daring innovation or original device, one may say that he achieves a high success, both in conception and in literary style. He inclines to intricacy of manner; but though his writing asks for thought, it is seldom obscure.—*Outlook*, June 18th, 1898.

"... The preface is a piece of very tiresome and affected writing, and starts the reader in quite a wrong mood. The book, on the other hand, contains some really distinguished verse. 'Compline' is a very stately prelude; 'At Stratford Festival' is a fine poem. . . . In a long poem called 'The Ordered House' . . . Mr. Bond is perhaps at his best. There is a majesty about many of the stanzas, a stately march of word and line, a sonorous and dignified philosophy which is highly impressive:—

So gladly from a darkening world I pass;
Even as the labourer marks at set of sun
The shadows steal and lengthen o'er the grass,
And hails that signal of his day's task done:
Not fearful of the reckoning, not as one
Forecasting punishment remembers where
Deeds blot the past he dare not look upon;
But homewards, through a quiet evening air,
Anticipating naught but happiest welcome there.

Mr. Bond must comfort himself with the applause of a little clan. He may not be bought, but he will be respectfully reviewed and carefully read, and not forgotten."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, August 11th, 1898.

